MOUNT BARKE
PUBLIC REALM
STRATEGY

Prepared for

The Shire of Plantagenet
March 2025

Shire of Plantagenet

REALM studios

Acknowledgement of Country

We pay our respects to their Ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge that through honouring Country, we also honour their timeless connections to Country.

It is also here on this Country that we acknowledge our mutual responsibility to safeguard the landscape and its many sites and places, and its living history. Beyond the protection and enhancement of Country, we also make space so its traditional owners are respected, listened to and learned from, and that the understanding of Country and connection form the foundations of decision making.

If we care for Country, Country cares for us.

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1.0 Introduction

Through the creation of a cohesive public realm that fosters a thriving local economy and building a strong, inclusive community, this strategy aims to improve the overall quality of life and experience for all who visit or reside in Mount Barker.

The Shire of Plantagenet is excited to announce the development of its comprehensive Public Realm Strategy for the Mount Barker Town Centre. This initiative aims to create a cohesive framework that enhances the town's public spaces, making them more functional, enjoyable, and accessible for the community and visitors.
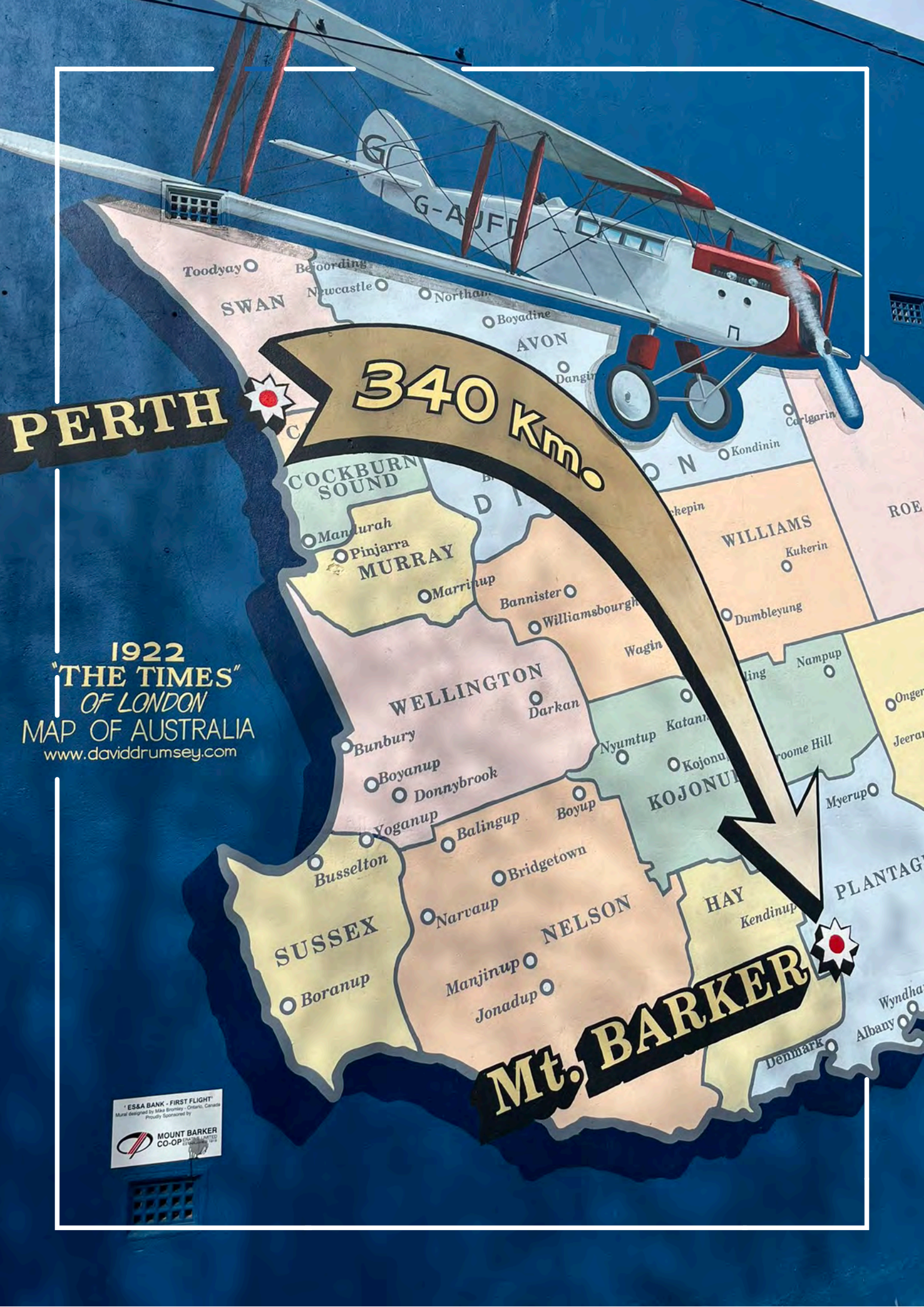
Mount Barker, situated south of Perth, near the stunning Porongurup and Stirling Ranges, is known for its beautiful walking trails, award-winning wineries and bakery, and rich heritage. Despite these attractions, the town centre's public spaces currently appear disjointed and lack a unified landscape framework. Previous investments have been piecemeal, focusing on individual projects, which has led to some areas becoming outdated and disconnected. Additionally, infrastructure such as the active freight railway line complicates physical connectivity, making it difficult for the community to fully engage with all of the town's available amenities.

This Public Realm Strategy aims to address these issues by creating a more connected and cohesive town centre. The strategy will enhance liveability by prioritising health, safety, aesthetics, and biodiversity. It will improve physical connectivity, ensuring that the town's movement network supports the daily lives of both residents and visitors. A consistent approach to public space design will be established, ensuring all areas reflect a unified vision.

Central to this strategy is the expression and celebration of Mount Barker's unique narrative and cultural identity. By understanding and nurturing the existing stories of the place, we aim to create a public realm that is both legible and welcoming, with a clear purpose and hierarchy of spaces. The strategy will also focus on sustainable design, promoting environments that benefit both human and environmental health.

Moreover, the Public Realm Strategy will provide clarity for developers, designers, and government entities regarding long-term strategies and guidelines. It will identify priorities and outline projects that can be implemented quickly alongside those requiring longer-term investment. The strategy will also emphasise the importance of preserving the identity and culture of the Menang people, the traditional custodians of the land, and ensuring that public spaces cater to the diverse needs of the community, including older residents, caregivers, individuals with mobility aids, and culturally diverse groups.

Ultimately, the Public Realm Strategy seeks to create safe, inclusive spaces where everyone, regardless of gender, age, ability, background, or circumstance, can live, work, and visit. By fostering a thriving local economy and building a strong, inclusive community, the strategy aims to improve the overall quality of life and experience for all who visit or reside in Mount Barker. The Shire of Plantagenet is committed to making these public spaces not just functional and enjoyable, but also a source of pride and identity for the community.

PERTH

340 Km.

1922
"THE TIMES"
OF LONDON
MAP OF AUSTRALIA
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Toodyay   Be...ording
SWAN   Newcastle   Northam
AVON   Boyadine
Dangi...

COCKBURN
SOUND
Mandurah
Pinjarra
MURRAY
Marrinup   Bannister
Williamsbourgh
WELLINGTON   Darkan   Wagin
Bunbury
Boyanup
Donnybrook   Nyumtup   Katann...
Yoganup   Kojonu...   roome Hill
Balingup   Boyup   KOJONU...
Busselton   Bridgetown
SUSSEX   Narvaup   NELSON   HAY   Kendinup
Boranup   Manjinup   Jonadup

...kepin   Kondinin   Carlgarin
WILLIAMS   Kukerin   ROE
Dumbleyung
...ling   Nampup
Onger...
Jeeran...
Myerup
PLANTAG...
Wyndha...
Denmark   Albany

Mt. BARKER

'ES&A BANK - FIRST FLIGHT'
Mural designed by Mike Bromley - Ontario, Canada
Proudly Sponsored by

MOUNT BARKER
CO-OP

2.0 Part of the Great Southern Region

Mount Barker is located in the Great Southern of Australia, one of the state's most diverse and vibrant areas, known for its unique blend of natural beauty, agricultural productivity, cultural heritage, and economic vitality. Many towns in the South West of Australia face the challenge of balancing development with conservation, aiming to sustain their unique environment and high quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Understanding the role Mount Barker plays in this regional context is key to unlocking its potential.

Mount Barker

Legend

——	Shire Boundary
——	National Park
——	Rivers
——	Main Roads
——	Train Line
——	Major Towns
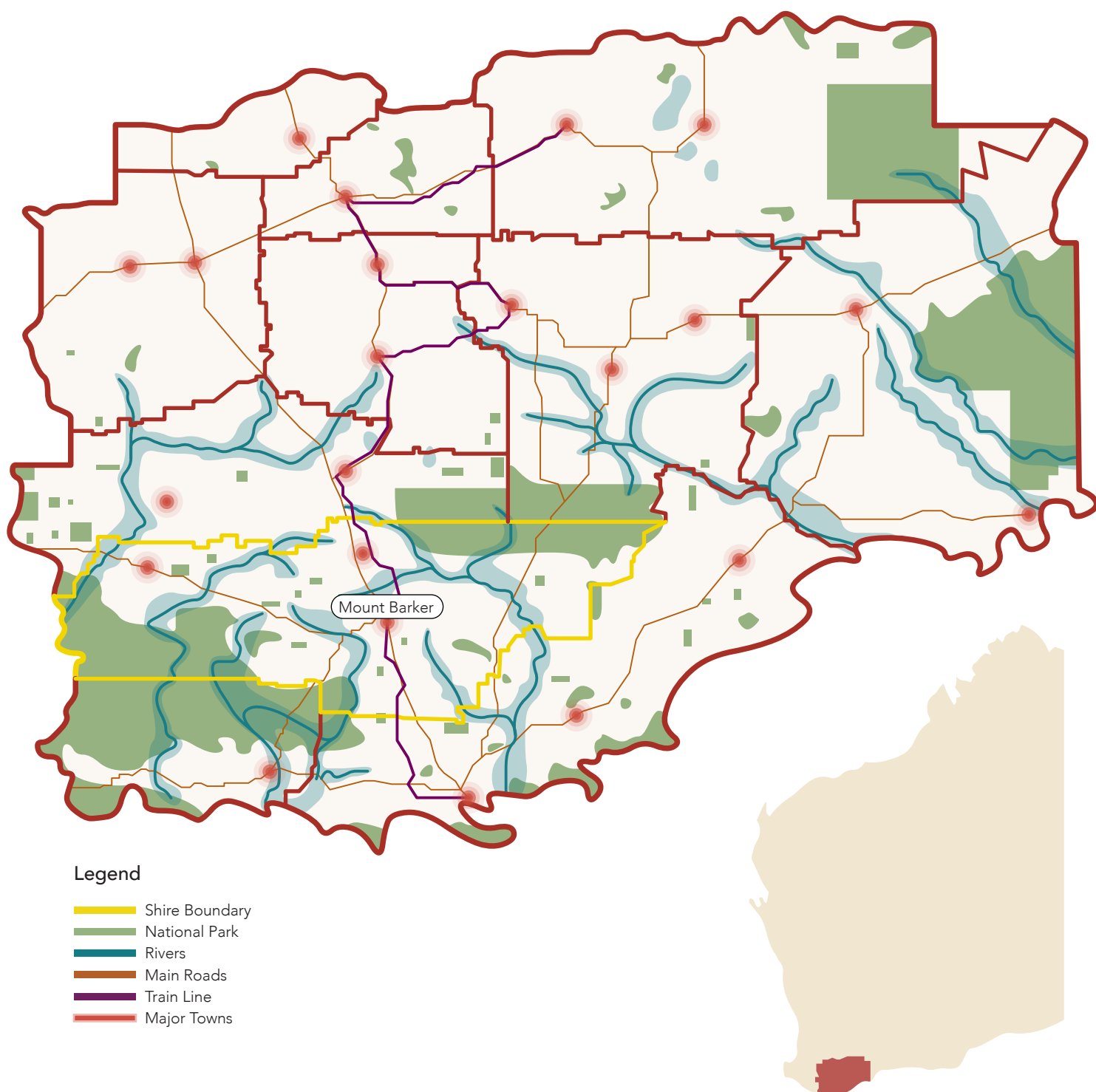
Mount Barker's Role in the Great Southern Region

Mount Barker continues to be a vital agricultural hub in the Great Southern region, producing a variety of crops and livestock, and is particularly renowned for its premium wines. However, the industry faces challenges such as climate change, soil degradation, and water management. Farmers are increasingly adopting sustainable practices to address these issues.

Agriculture and viticulture remain the cornerstones of Mount Barker's economy. Despite facing challenges such as market fluctuations and environmental issues, they continue to provide significant employment and economic benefits to the community.

Mount Barker attracts tourists to its natural landmarks, such as the Porongurup and Stirling Ranges. These areas are popular for hiking, birdwatching, and enjoying the natural scenery.

The town supports a variety of small businesses, retail outlets, and service providers that cater to both locals and visitors. These businesses are crucial for the local economy but face competition from larger urban centres. Transport links to nearby cities and within the region are essential for economic growth and accessibility.

Mount Barker has a diverse population, with a mix of long-term residents and newer arrivals. The town has seen modest population growth, driven by an influx of people seeking a rural lifestyle with access to urban amenities.

3.0 The Study Area

The town of Mount Barker, located in the Great Southern region of Western Australia, is a charming town that serves as the administrative and commercial hub for the Shire of Plantagenet. Known for its stunning natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and thriving agricultural sector, Mount Barker offers a unique blend of rural charm and modern amenities.

This public realm strategy focuses on the central town site, indicated by the dashed line in the plan. This area is the commercial heart of the town, containing its core tourist, civic, and retail functions. The site is bound by Albany Highway to the east and Lowood Road to the west. The site area also includes the town cemetery. This space does not form part of the main study area, but the Shire would like to better connect it to the town centre by creating better walkability and a common language between the spaces.

Legend

1. Accommodation (Caravan Park + Motel)

2. Sporting Centre

3. Retail Centre

4. Tourist Information Centre + Historic Railway Station

5. Civic Centre

6. Wilson Park

7. Industrial Uses

"Billion year old mountains and karri forest. Lands rich in unique plants and vibrant wildflowers. Heart-pumping peak hikes. Prehistoric insects and invertebrates. World-class Riesling and family-owned wineries. Breathtaking views. Night skies that are the perfect dark canvas for the stars and planets. Local produce that's so fresh, you can taste the difference. Vibrant communities with art, history and culture pulsing through their veins."

Mountain Country Tourism Campaign

4.0 Key Successes
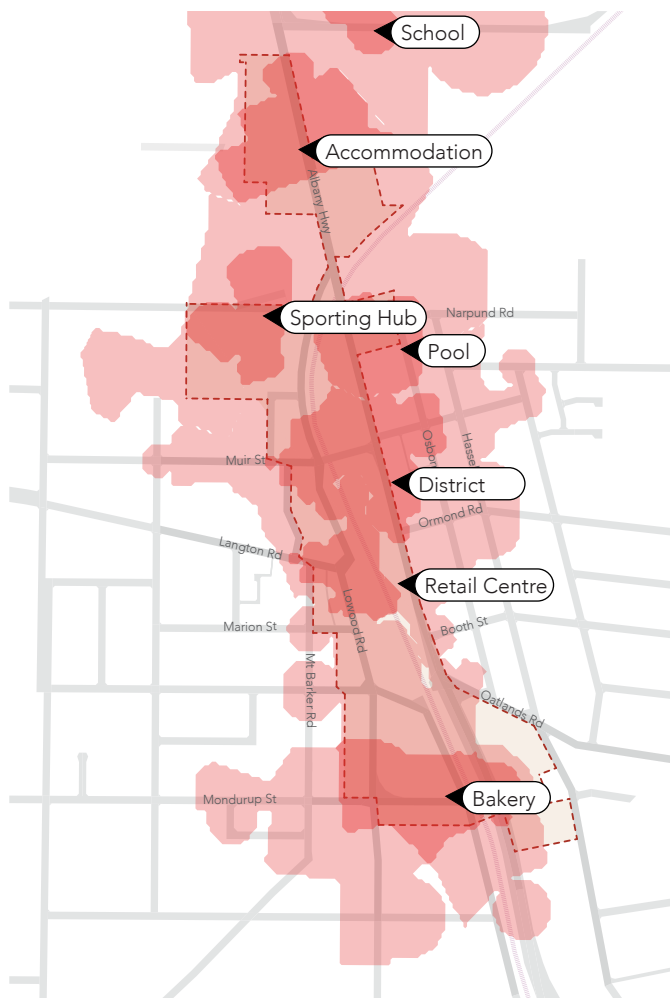
North to South Walkability

Legend

▬ 4 Minute Walking Distance

▬ 8 Minute Walking Distance

The town has the potential to be an incredibly walkable place. It has naturally developed in a 'pearl necklace' format, which refers to a design strategy where a series of key sites or nodes are developed in a linear arrangement, much like pearls on a string. These nodes, or "pearls," are connected by a transportation or pedestrian corridor, forming a cohesive and accessible sequence of destinations. This concept is used to enhance connectivity, encourage walkability, and distribute urban functions along a continuous path.
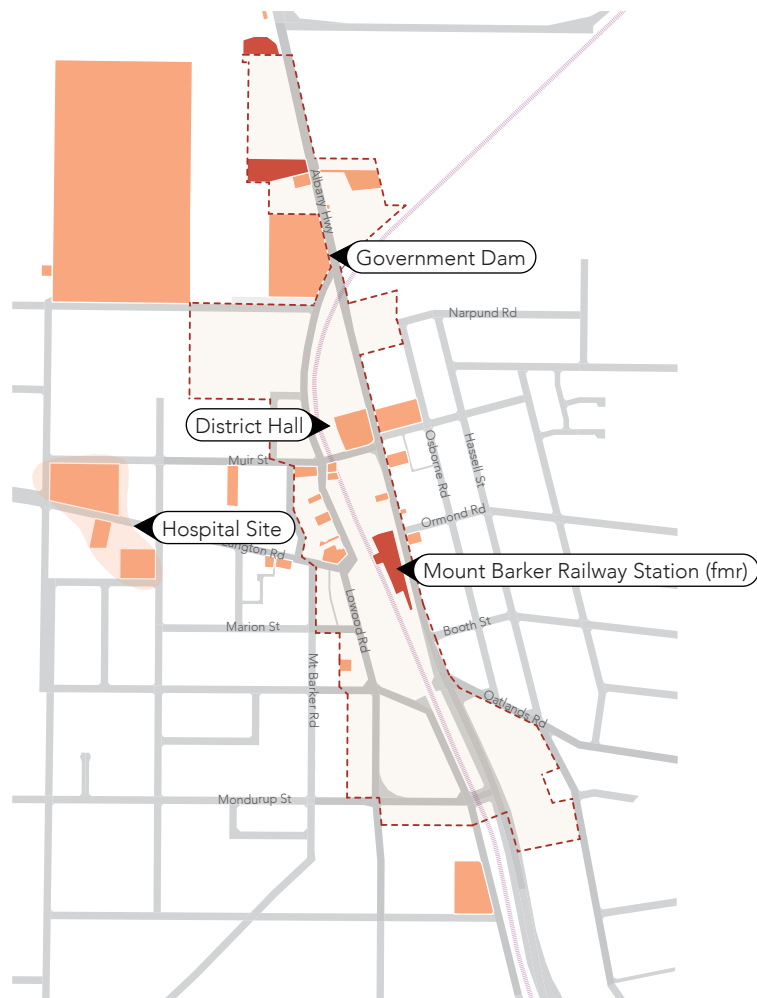
Preserving Heritage

Legend

▬ Local Listings

▬ State Listings

The Shire of Plantagenet has worked to preserve the history of the town, with much of its original fabric still intact. These buildings provide us with a tangible link to the past and contribute significantly to the town's unique character and identity. Their presence and preservation is often a source of pride for the community. Economically, tourists are often drawn to towns with historic charm, leading to increased spending in local businesses such as cafés and shops. Well-maintained heritage buildings can also make a town more attractive to potential residents and investors. The strong presence of heritage in the Mount Barker town site enhances its overall aesthetic appeal, creating a strong sense of place and providing a visually pleasing environment that can foster a strong sense of community and identity.
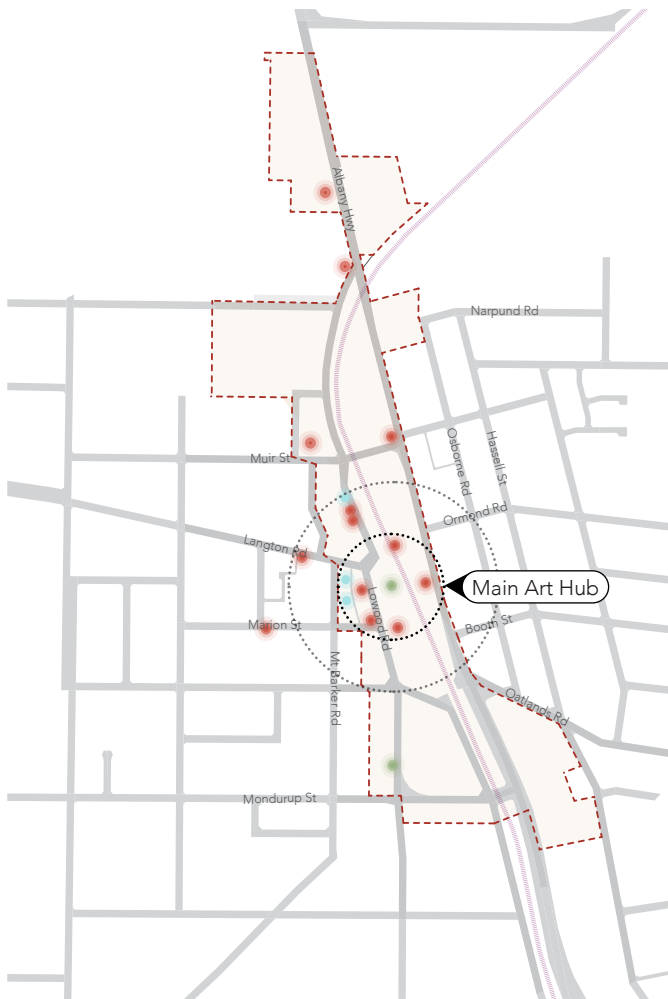
An Emerging Artfulness

Legend

- ■ Murals
- ■ Sculptures
- ■ Studios

Mount Barker does not have a formal public art strategy, but the Shire of Plantagenet supports art and culture through several programs and events. One of the key events is the "Mountains and Murals" festival, where international artists, known as the Walldogs, created murals that celebrate the local history and attractions. This festival was a community effort, involving local organisations, the Shire of Plantagenet, Mount Barker Police, the Department of Justice, the Plantagenet Arts Council, and the Great Southern Emerging Leaders Group. The murals are a significant part of the town's public art scene and have added character and interest to Mount Barker. As a result of these initiatives and the contributions of local artists such as Sobrane, Art Chatter Gallery and the Cheeky Parrot Gallery, an artful soul is emerging in the public realm, bringing life and beauty to the streets.
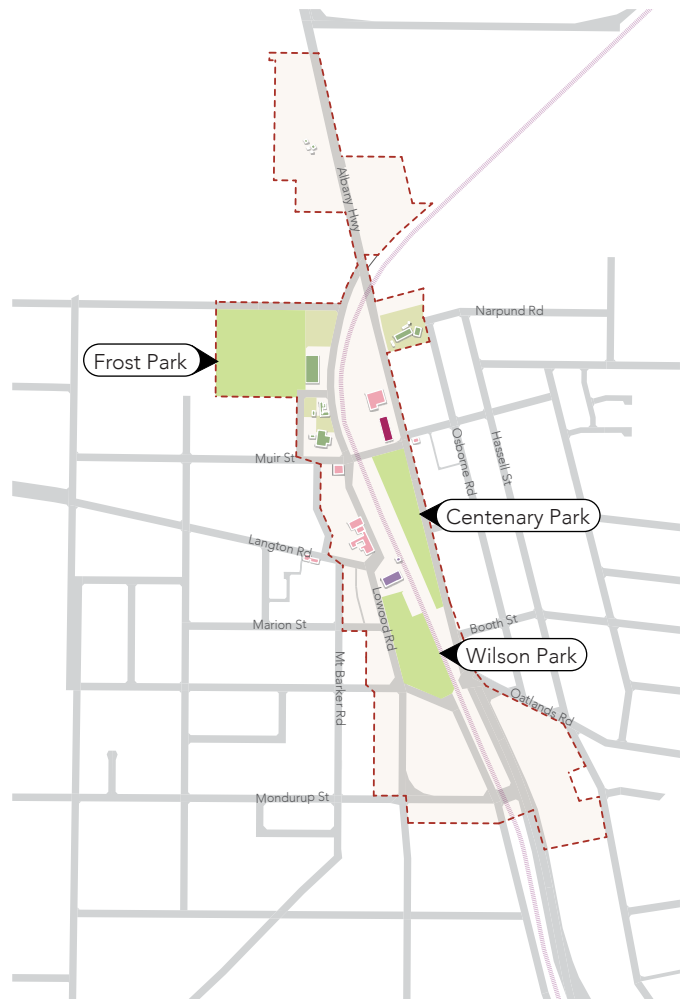
Investing in Community Infrastructure

Legend

- ■ Sporting Facilities
- ■ Public Parks
- ■ Sport Centres
- ■ District Hall
- ■ Shire of Plantagenet
- ■ Restaurants

Mount Barker is the commercial and social hub of the surrounding agricultural region, supporting both those who live in town and those who visit from nearby farmland. It meets many of the civic needs of a regional destination, such as sporting facilities, grocery stores, and service-based businesses. The Shire continues to support and grow the town's civic function, ensuring that it is able to meet the needs of the community and enrich their health and wellbeing. Investment in new civic facilities, such as the public swimming pool and Wilson Park upgrades, is evidence of this commitment.

5.0 Key Issues
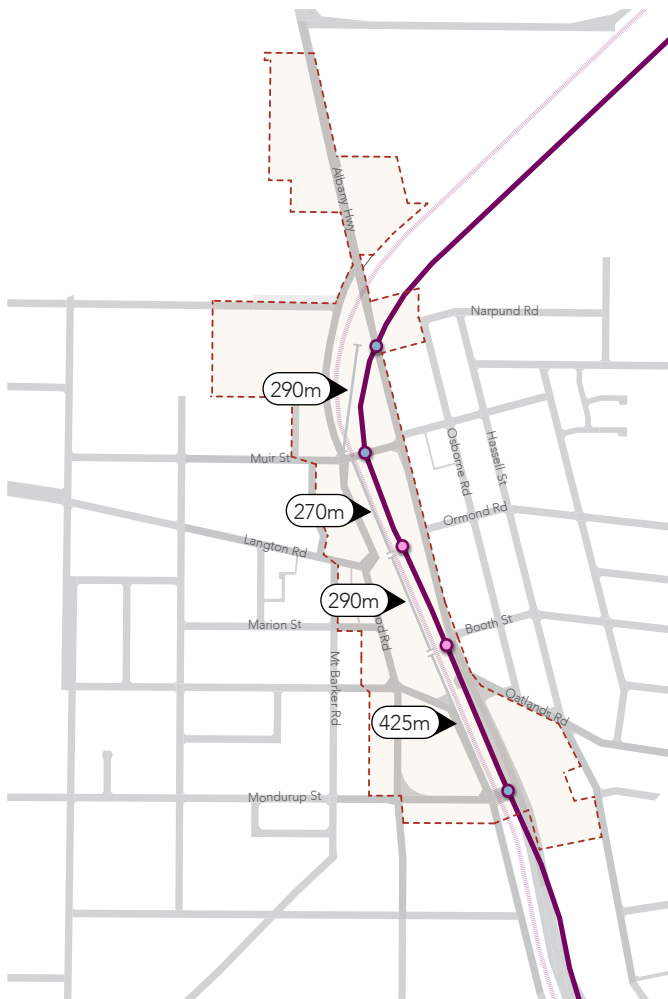
Infrastructure Comes First

Legend

▬ Railway Line	
▬ Vehicle Crossing Point	
▬ Pedestrian Crossing Point	

(290m)▶ Distance between railway pedestrian crossing points

The town's infrastructure has historically prioritised vehicle and freight efficiency, with public spaces designed primarily for cars and freight rail. This focus has resulted in limited accessibility and social interaction, particularly as the railway line divides the town, and significant drainage infrastructure further complicates east-west travel. Although the railway is infrequently used, its impact on town functionality is considerable. Recent planning efforts aim to shift the emphasis towards enhancing the human experience by prioritising pedestrians and cyclists. Prioritising cars has increased safety risks, reduced accessibility, and discouraged walking, leading to a high prevalence of health issues like obesity and heart disease. Environmentally, this approach has contributed to higher emissions and reduced green spaces, negatively impacting the quality of life. By adopting pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, Mount Barker can promote safety, health, and environmental sustainability, benefiting both residents and local businesses.
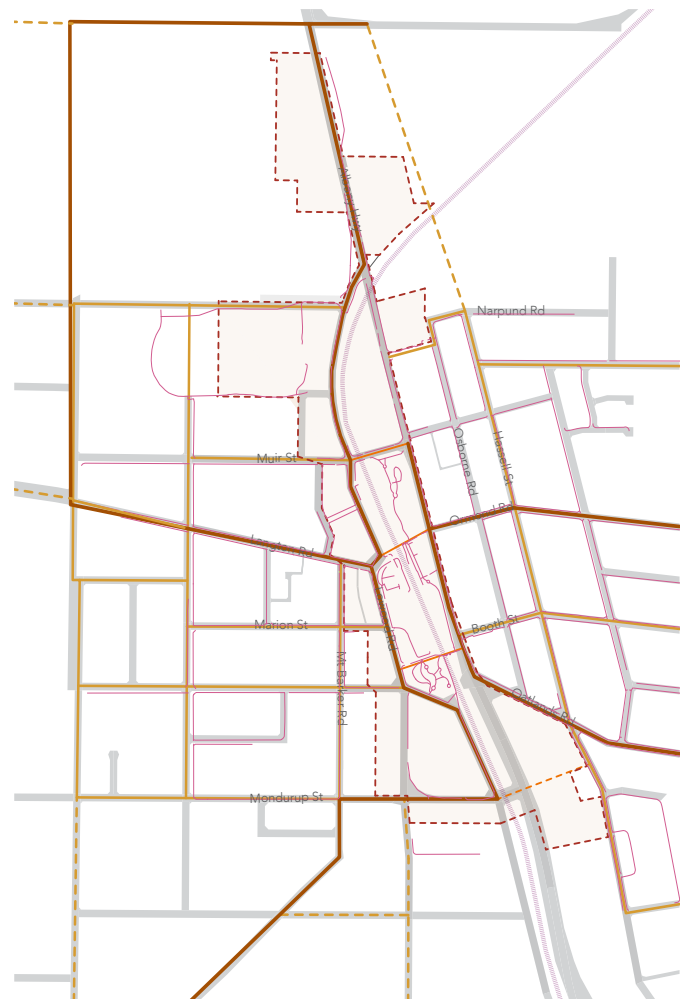
Incomplete Networks

Legend

▬ Cycle Routes	▬ Linkages
▬ Distribute Routes	▢▢▢ Future Linkages
▢▢▢ Future Distribution Routes	▬ Footpaths

The footpath network is incomplete, which has impacted the safety, accessibility, social cohesion, and overall liveability of the town. It increases the risk of accidents, as pedestrians may be forced to walk on roadsides, posing dangers, especially for those with disabilities, the elderly, and parents with strollers. Limited access to essential services and amenities can result in economic drawbacks for local businesses and reduced community interaction. The lack of continuous footpaths discourages walking, impacting public health and increasing car dependency, which contributes to higher traffic volumes, pollution, and noise. Incomplete footpaths can also hinder urban connectivity and make maintenance more challenging, leading to neglected public spaces. Addressing these issues by completing and upgrading the footpath network would enhance safety, accessibility, and overall quality of life.
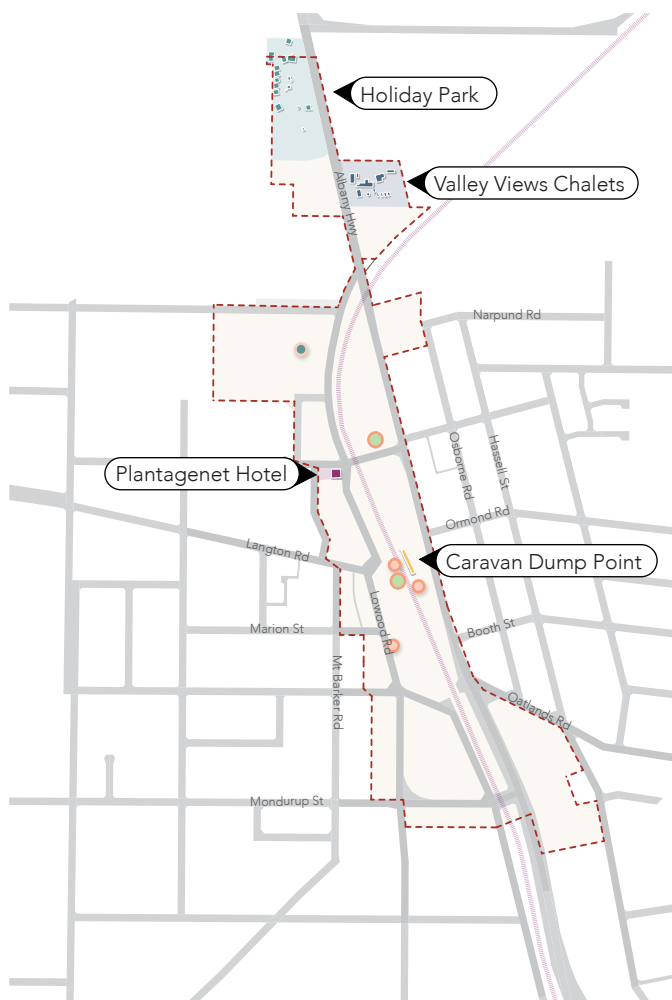
Accommodating Visitors

Legend

▬ Holiday Park		▬ Caravan Dump Point	
▬ Motel and Chalets		▬ Accessible Toilets	
▬ Hotel		▬ Unisex toilets	
		▬ Caravan Parking	

The town attracts around 60,000 tourists annually, drawn by its scenic beauty, wine region, and various festivals and events throughout the year. A significant portion of these tourists travel in caravans, with many opting to stay at local caravan parks such as Mount Barker Caravan Park and Porongurup Range Tourist Park. It is important that the town responds with appropriate tourism infrastructure, particularly for caravans, including well-planned parking bays and dump points that allow visitors to experience the best of Mount Barker whilst not impacting its functionality for the local community. At present, caravan parking is inconvenient and further complicates the town's connectivity.
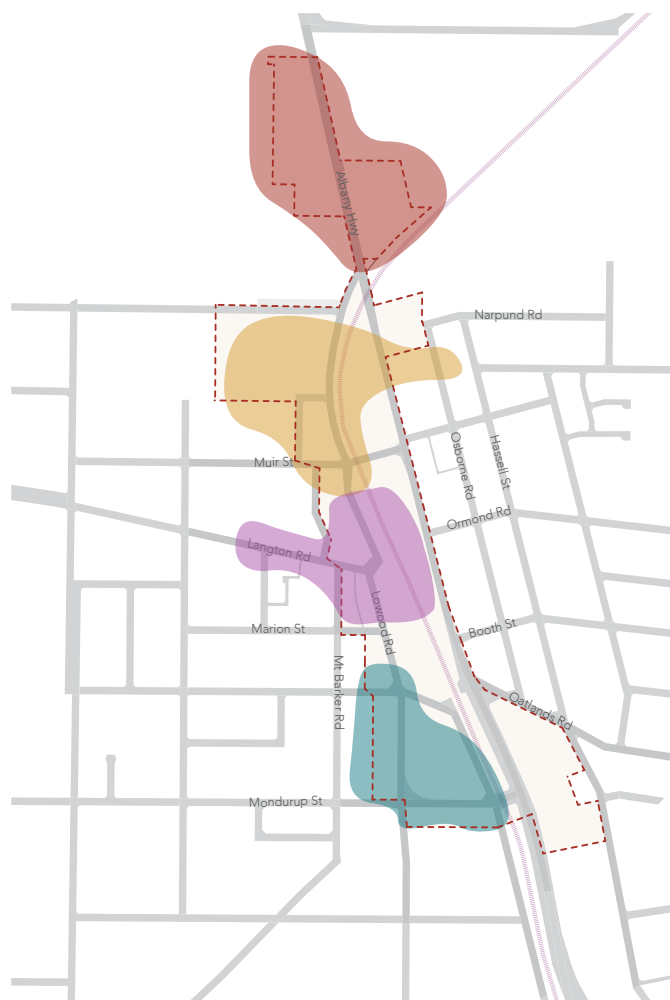
Monoculture Areas

Legend

▬ Visitors		▬ Industrial	
▬ Sporting			
▬ Retail			

The townsite has developed in such a manner that similar land uses have grouped together, creating hubs of singular activities. When areas of land use in a small town agglomerate around a single type of service, the public realm can experience several negative impacts. Homogeneity in public spaces may arise, catering primarily to the dominant service, thereby limiting the diversity of activities and appeal. This can reduce opportunities for community interaction and accessibility, making spaces less inclusive for all residents. Underutilisation of spaces outside peak service hours, stress on infrastructure, and environmental quality issues can also result. Aesthetic limitations may occur, affecting the town's visual appeal and reducing economic opportunities for local entrepreneurs. To mitigate these effects, promoting mixed-use development in Mount Barker could enhance diversity, functionality, and vibrancy, making public spaces more inclusive, accessible, and resilient.

6.0

Analysis

6.1 What is the 'Public Realm'?

The term 'public realm' refers to all the spaces and areas that are accessible and shared by everyone in a community. It's where people interact, move around, and experience their surroundings together. Together, these spaces shape how people live, work, and connect with each other in their community.

Town Squares + Parks: Gathering places for events, marketing and social occasions

Streets, Verges Footpaths: Whe people walk

Parks: Outdoor spaces for relaxation and recreation

+ ere

Landscape + Green Spaces

10 PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC SPACE

Adopted from the New South Wales 'Public Spaces Charter,' the 10 principles for quality public space serve as foundational guidelines for decision-making. Throughout the process, it is imperative to continuously assess whether each decision aligns with these principles.

Open + Welcoming

Everyone can access public space and feel welcome, respected and included.

Community Focused

Public space brings people together and builds strong, connected and resilient communities.

Culture + Creativity

Public space provides a platform for culture and creative expression that makes places more colorful, animated and thought-provoking.

Local character + identity

Public space reflects who we are and our diverse stories and histories.

Green + resilient

Public space connects us to nature, enhances biodiversity and builds climate resilience into communities.

Healthy + Active

Public space allows everyone to participate in activities that strengthen our health and wellbeing.

Local businesses + Economies

Public space supports a dynamic economic life and vibrant urban and town centers.

Safe + Secure

Everyone feels safe to access and use public space at all times of the day.

Designed for place

Public space is flexible and responds to its environment to meet the needs of its community.

Well Managed

Well-managed and maintained public space functions better and invites people to use and care for it.

6.2 Current User Experiences

"The measure of any great public space is not in its design but in its ability to adapt to and embrace the diversity of human experiences it holds."

A successful public realm caters to the diverse needs and experiences of its users, fostering a sense of belonging and engagement for all members of the community. This section delves into the varying ways individuals interact with and perceive public spaces, considering factors such as accessibility, comfort, safety, and enjoyment. By understanding these experiences, we can identify opportunities to create spaces that are welcoming, inclusive, and reflective of Mount Barker's unique identity.

Pedestrians Perspective

Mount Barker has good north-to-south connectivity, with Lowood Road providing a relatively straightforward and enjoyable walking experience. The east-to-west connection is poor, however, and significantly prohibits the movement of people through and across the town.

Footpath conditions vary throughout the town, with the main areas of Lowood Road being provided with wide and well-maintained thoroughfares, whilst other streets are not provided with a footpath at all.

Generally speaking, Albany Highway is a relatively hostile pedestrian environment, with large freight vehicles moving through at speed. It is important to direct foot traffic through to Lowood Road as quickly as possible, further highlighting the importance of the east-to-west connectivity of the townsite.

Cyclists Perspective

From a cyclist's perspective, moving through the Mount Barker Town Centre presents both opportunities and challenges. The town's natural beauty and compact layout make it an appealing place for cycling, offering a slower, more immersive way to experience the community. However, the current infrastructure can feel fragmented, with limited dedicated cycling lanes and paths, making navigation less intuitive and often requiring cyclists to share roads with vehicles. The central areas, especially around key crossing points and commercial zones, may feel congested or difficult to traverse safely due to vehicle prioritisation and the lack of clear, connected cycling routes.

Linking cyclists to the trails in the area is also important, and this is currently unclear.

Public Transport User Perspective

There is no public transport provider in Mount Barker, with the only bus servicing the town being the TransWA Perth-to-Albany coach. The bus stop for this coach is located by the historic train station, now being used as the visitor and information centre. This coach station is well located in terms of being in the centre of town, but accessibility is hindered by the lack of east-to-west connections through the town.

The arrival experience for those coming by coach is worth considering, as this may be many people's first impression of Mount Barker. The rail crossing is not pleasant and directs people through to the rear of the IGA, meaning they must navigate through delivery zones, caravan parking areas, and car parks before reaching the town centre. They essentially need to walk through the 'back door' of the town. There is no clear pathway to move through once on the other side, and overall, it provides a less-than-desirable arrival experience.

Caravanners Perspective

According to Tourism Western Australia, the Great Southern region attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. A substantial portion of these visitors are caravan and camper tourists, particularly during the peak travel seasons. These tourists contributes significantly to the local economy. Visitors spend on accommodation (caravan parks), food, fuel, and other local services, boosting regional businesses.

As a smaller town, Mount Barker needs to accommodate caravan tourists in a way that allows visitors to access amenities such as refill stations, parking and dump points, whilst not detracting from the functionality and beauty of the town overall.

Presently, the centrally located caravan parking near the local IGA causes additional friction at the critical east to west railway crossing point. Remedying this will help with making this a more legible place. The intention would be to provide unobtrusive caravan parking in the Town that allows visitors to enjoy the town site, collect their goods from IGA, visit amenities such as public toilets and the visitor centre.
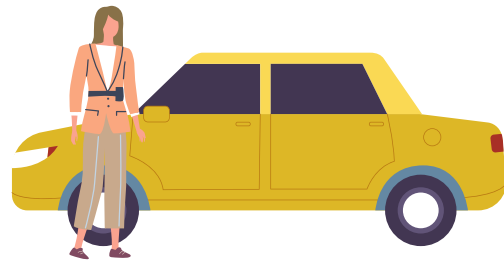
Drivers Perspective

Cars currently sit at the highest order in the town's mobility pyramid, when in reality, they should be giving priority to more human-centred and sustainable modes of transport. With overall improvements to the east-to-west connectivity and a reprioritisation of pedestrians as the primary mode of transport, the town would likely experience significant shifts in the way its public realm functions.

Albany Highway

Albany Highway is the primary movement corridor through the town, where the experience is focused on the safe and efficient movement of vehicles that do not intend to visit the town centre. Providing this corridor is critical for bypassing the large number of freight vehicles that traverse the Albany-to-Perth route. For prosperity, it is important that wayfinding along Albany Highway directs opportunistic visitors to the town centre. This being said, Albany Highway provides an additional barrier to the east-to-west connectivity of the town, with a large number of residents being located to the east of the highway. Providing a safe and legible route to cross the highway is key to encouraging residents to make the mode shift to more sustainable forms of transport for local trips.

Lowood Road

Lowood Road is the central road for the town, essentially forming a linear town centre. Linear town centres such as these, with their elongated layout along a main road, typically face several challenges. These include traffic congestion from local and through traffic, pedestrian safety and accessibility issues due to long distances and busy roads, and limited opportunities for creating public spaces. Businesses spread out along the main road can struggle to create a cohesive commercial hub, leading to urban sprawl, aesthetic monotony, and environmental impact. Additionally, the disparity in economic viability can cause businesses on the periphery to struggle. Addressing these issues generally requires strategic urban planning, including developing secondary nodes, enhancing public transport and pedestrian infrastructure, and creating public spaces to foster a cohesive and vibrant town centre.

6.3 A Place in Nature

One of Mount Barker's greatest strengths is the natural environment in which it sits. From the surrounding views to the large open spaces, vacant blocks of land, and mature planting, it feels like a very green place. As a natural valley, the collection and management of water is a key attribute of the visual amenity and function of the town, and at present is largely done through formalised open drainage networks.

Open Spaces

Mount Barker has a strong green spine through the city centre. Celebrating this and extending the greening beyond the boundary of the spaces and into the streets would create a more inviting and resilient townsite.

Water

Mount Barker's water resources include both surface and groundwater. Surface water is found in creeks, rivers, and small reservoirs, essential for local agriculture and domestic use. The region relies on these water sources for irrigation, given the agricultural nature of the surrounding areas. Groundwater, drawn from aquifers, supplements the surface water supply, especially during dry periods.

Soil

The soil in Mount Barker varies but generally consists of loamy and sandy soils with areas of clay. These soil types are conducive to agriculture, supporting vineyards, orchards, and other crops. However, soil health is a concern due to potential nutrient depletion and erosion. Sustainable planting practices are essential to maintain soil fertility and prevent degradation.

Vegetation

Mount Barker's vegetation is a mix of native flora and cultivated plants. Native vegetation includes a variety of eucalyptus species, shrubs, and grasses adapted to the local climate. The area also features significant agricultural vegetation, such as grapevines in vineyards and various fruit trees in orchards. Efforts to preserve native vegetation are important for maintaining biodiversity and ecological balance.

Opportunities

1 Valley Setting and Water

The town sits in a valley, cradled between two hills, making it a natural catchment area for water. As a result, water is present throughout the town, providing an essential resource that supports greening efforts and enhances the lushness of the landscape. This abundant access to water not only sustains the natural environment but also enables the town's greenery to thrive.

2 Visibility of Green Open Spaces

Green spaces are prominent and expansive throughout the town centre, always within view. This abundance of greenery makes it possible to establish a continuous green corridor that seamlessly connects one space to another, enhancing both the natural landscape and the experience of moving through the town.

3 Historic Dam Sites

These historic dam sites provide an opportunity to create more passive recreation spaces in the town. Acknowledging their presence by creating a series of walking trails through the space will allow locals and visitors to connect with the heritage of the area.

4 View to Mountain Ranges

The borrowed landscape of the nearby mountain ranges provides a beautiful natural backdrop to the town. There is an opportunity to better connect the planting palette to species found in these mountain ranges.

5 Celebrating Agricultural Heritage

The site of the former apple packing and processing shed presents a unique opportunity to celebrate agricultural plant species. A small collection of locally significant apple species has been planted in the centre of the town and could be expanded upon.

Constraints

1 Drainage Infrastructure

Drainage infrastructure serves as a safety barrier along the railway line, restricting crossing to designated points. While this enhances safety, it also limits pedestrian movement and reduces the town's walkability.

2 Derelict Open Spaces

The town's numerous and expansive green spaces, while a valuable asset, can stretch resources thin. As a result, some green spaces may appear unkempt, detracting from the overall attractiveness of the town.

Legend

Geology

– – – – 10m Contours

Green Spaces

Parks
Sporting Areas
Green Space
Green Empty Lots
● ● ● New Street Trees

Water

Dam
IIIIIIIIIII Surface Drainage Infrastructure

Site

IIIIIIIIIII Railway

Albany Hwy

Narpund Rd

Osborne Rd

Hassel St

Ormond Rd

Booth St

Oatlands Rd

Muir St

Langton Rd

Marion St

Mt Barker Rd

Lowood Rd

...up St

240m
250m
280m
250m
300m
250m
240m

6.4 A Safe + Livable Place

Mount Barker in Western Australia is generally considered a safe town, especially compared to larger urban areas. The crime rates are relatively low, with most incidents involving minor property crimes or vandalism. The close-knit community fosters a strong sense of local support and vigilance, contributing to overall safety. The town is well-served by local police, fire services, and medical facilities, ensuring quick emergency response times. While natural hazards such as bushfires and storms are a concern, preparedness plans and resources are in place to manage these risks. However, the town's infrastructure, historically designed to prioritise vehicles, poses some challenges for pedestrian and cyclist safety, which recent public space redesign efforts aim to address.

Opportunities

1 Community Amenities

The town centre hosts a significant number of community facilities, particularly concentrated in the northern end. In a regional setting, having a robust network of community amenities ensures a steady flow of people coming into town to access these services, supporting consistent activity and engagement in the area.

2 Wilson Park Upgrade

The town is undertaking an upgrade to the amenities at Wilson Park. There is an opportunity to address the lack of passive surveillance and activity in this area of the town through this work.

Constraints

1 Night-Time Activity

Very few land uses support night-time activity in the town centre. Activating the town centre beyond the traditional 9-to-5 could be difficult as a result.

2 Lack of Passive Surveillance

Some areas in the town have little to no passive surveillance, making users of these spaces more vulnerable. There is a need to address this in both privately owned land and public spaces. This would require changes to the planning legislation that determines the built-form outcomes.

3 Friction Between Road Users

This is a shared space where vehicle and pedestrian numbers are at their highest. The need to define the hierarchy of users and promote the safety of pedestrians in the space is important.

4 Derelict Buildings + Spaces

Several buildings and spaces in the town appear run down or in need of maintenance. This contributes to a perception of the town being empty and unloved.

5 Fast Moving and Heavy Vehicles

Traffic moving along Albany Highway is fast and often consists of a high number of freight vehicles. This poses significant risk to other users of this space, and there is a need to address this.
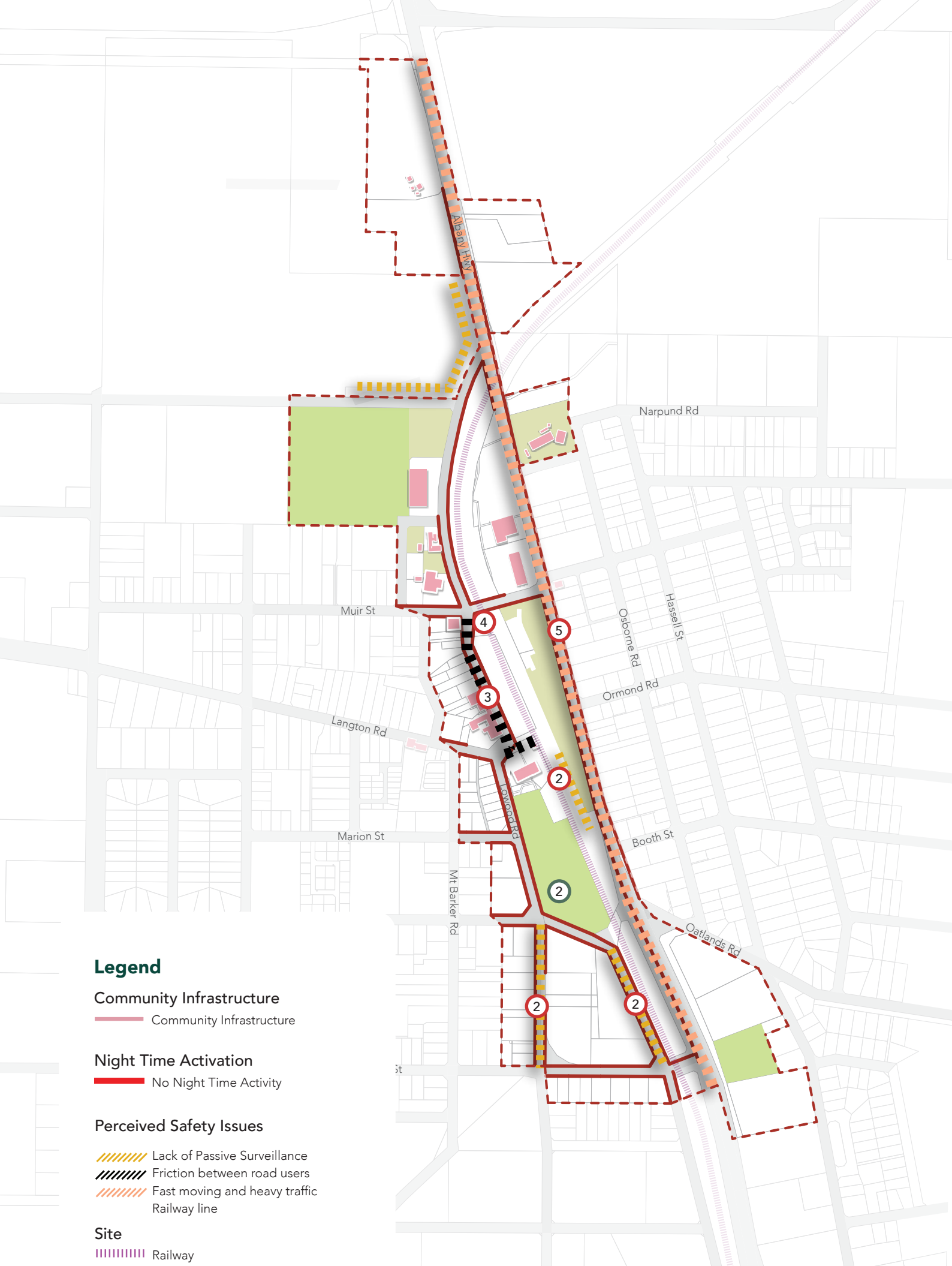
Legend

Community Infrastructure

Community Infrastructure

Night Time Activation

No Night Time Activity

Perceived Safety Issues

Lack of Passive Surveillance

Friction between road users

Fast moving and heavy traffic
Railway line

Site

Railway

6.5 A Place to Visit

The public realm can significantly support tourism in a town by creating an inviting, vibrant, and accessible environment that enhances the visitor experience. Key elements to design and consider include attractive and well-maintained public spaces such as parks, plazas, and pedestrian-friendly streets that encourage exploration and leisure. Integrating clear signage, wayfinding, and information points helps tourists navigate and discover local attractions. Incorporating local culture and heritage through public art, historical markers, and themed events adds unique character and appeal. Ensuring amenities such as seating, restrooms, and shaded areas provide comfort, while green spaces and landscaping improve aesthetics and environmental quality. Promoting accessibility and safety through well-lit, clean, and secure areas ensures a positive experience for all visitors. Additionally, facilitating local businesses with strategically placed markets, cafés, and shops can boost the local economy and provide authentic experiences for tourists. By thoughtfully designing the public realm, towns can create memorable and enjoyable experiences that attract and retain visitors.

Opportunities

1 Walk ability of Town

Due to its small size, the town is a very walkable place. With additional amenities to support a person's comfort and a more legible and connected movement network, this can be further improved.

2 Places of Interest

With its heritage buildings, emerging art scene, and cafés, there are places to visit throughout the town. The southern end of the town has fewer places of interest and could be diversified to improve its offering.

3 Linking Accommodation to the Town

Current tourist accommodation is primarily located outside the town centre, in the northern part of the study area. Better connecting this accommodation to the town centre through walking trails will reduce visitor reliance on cars and encourage exploration of the area.

Constraints

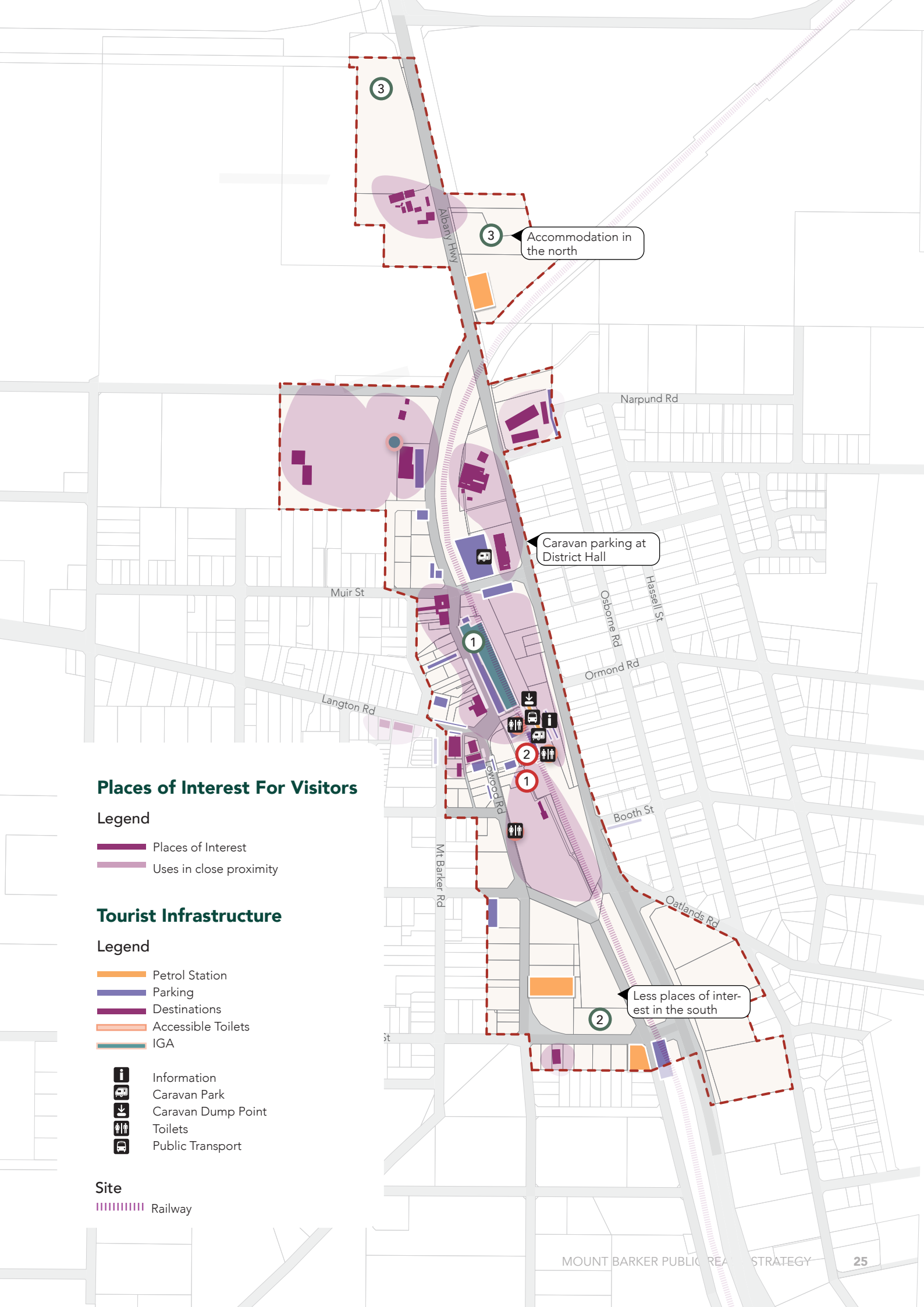**1 Lack of Free Overnight Caravan Parking Areas**

Mount Barker is in competition with other towns in the region, most of which currently offer free overnight caravan facilities. Previous facilities in the town were closed due to perceived antisocial behaviours. It has been identified that exploring the provision of such facilities in the town may boost the local economy and vitality of the area.

2 Caravan Parking

Caravans have a significant impact on roads, parking areas, and the way we plan Australian country towns. Their popularity among tourists and travellers, particularly in regional and rural areas, necessitates careful consideration of infrastructure and urban design. This is true for Mount Barker, where caravan parking clogs areas of the town. Careful planning for their inclusion in the public realm is key.

3 ◄ Accommodation in the north

Narpund Rd

◄ Caravan parking at District Hall

Muir St

Langton Rd

Ormond Rd

Osborne Rd

Hassell St

Booth St

Oatlands Rd

Less places of inter-est in the south ►

Places of Interest For Visitors

Legend

▬ Places of Interest
▬ Uses in close proximity

Tourist Infrastructure

Legend

▬ Petrol Station
▬ Parking
▬ Destinations
▬ Accessible Toilets
▬ IGA

i Information
Caravan Park
Caravan Dump Point
Toilets
Public Transport

Site

|||||||||||| Railway

6.6 Streets as Places

The Concept

The term "place" refers to the qualities and characteristics that make a physical space meaningful, engaging, and valuable to people. It's about creating environments that are not just functional but also enjoyable, welcoming, and vibrant. A "place" in this sense is a location where people want to spend time, interact, and participate in community life.

Transforming a mere space into a destination that people feel connected to, and where they have positive experiences, involves considering elements like aesthetics, accessibility, safety, and the availability of amenities that encourage social interaction and community engagement.

Understanding that streets are places embodies the concept of streets being more than just conduits for vehicles and pedestrians; they are vibrant, dynamic public spaces that foster social interaction, economic activity, and cultural expression. Well-designed streets prioritise the needs of all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists, and often feature elements such as wide footpaths, seating, trees, public art, and spaces for outdoor dining. These streets encourage people to linger, interact, and engage with their surroundings, creating a sense of community and place. By integrating amenities that support social life and local businesses, streets as places contribute to the overall health, well-being, and vitality of urban areas, making them more liveable and enjoyable for everyone.

Lowood Road

As a linear town centre, Lowood Road is the premier 'place' in Mount Barker. It is currently functioning at an acceptable level, but more can be done to support it in becoming a more vibrant and thriving place.

Creating a vibrant and welcoming place on a town centre road in a country town involves several important considerations. Engaging the community in the planning process ensures the space meets local needs and reflects the town's identity. Prioritising pedestrian-friendly design with wide footpaths, safe crossings, and accessible zones encourages walking and lingering. Integrating public spaces like parks and plazas, highlighting local character and culture through design elements and public art, and supporting mixed-use development all contribute to an active and inviting atmosphere. Incorporating greenery and landscaping enhances aesthetics and environmental quality, while traffic-calming measures improve safety. Hosting regular events and activities fosters community engagement, and using sustainable design practices promotes environmental responsibility. Ensuring good connectivity with the rest of the town, including public transport links and cycling infrastructure, completes the vision of a lively, attractive town centre that enhances community life and supports local businesses.

Opportunities

1 **Small-Scale Retail Shop fronts**

The town centre is well-provided with boutique-style shopfronts that feature historic architecture. This gives a charm to the built form that is very desirable in linear town centres and provides a good level of interest.

2 **Increasing Green Infrastructure**

Wide verges and the availability of water provide good conditions for increasing the green infrastructure of the streets in town. Increasing canopy cover will have many benefits.

3 **Event Spaces**

There are several spaces within the town that could provide a great venue for community events. This includes Wilson Park, the admin centre forecourt, the IGA car park, and the retail core of Lowood Road. Ensuring event spaces are planned for is important.

4 **Wide Verges**

Lowood Road is characterised by wide verges, leaving plenty of room for businesses to spill onto the street, street trees, cycle lanes, and other infrastructure that supports life in the streets.

5 **Connecting Secondary Retail Hubs**

Connecting the retail spaces on Lowood Road with the retail spaces on Langton Road will ensure a more fluid experience in town.

6 **Leaning in to the Emerging Art Scene**

Recent mural projects and thriving local galleries mean that the main street of Mount Barker feels artful. Leaning into this and bringing the street to life with more art is a way for the local community to express and connect with their identity.

Constraints

1 **Low market demand for vacant shops**

There are several vacant shopfronts in the town centre with low demand, meaning they sit vacant for some time. This impacts the perception of the town's vibrancy.

2 **Ground Level Change at IGA Carpark**

The large car park and significant change in ground levels at the local IGA mean that the traditional shopfrontages that would typically be provided along the street are missing. Careful consideration is needed to encourage an intimate and seamless public realm in this area.

Street Hierarchy

Legend

- ▬▬ Highway
- ▬▬ Major Roads
- ▬▬ Minor Roads
- ////// Retail Centre

An Emerging Artfulness

Legend

- ▬ Murals
- ▬ Sculptures

Active Frontages

Legend

- ▬ Active Frontages
- ▬ Potential to be Active

Site

- ||||||||| Railway

Map labels:
- Albany Hwy
- Narpund Rd
- Limited ability for activation
- Muir St
- Langton Rd
- Town Centre
- Osborne Rd
- Hassell St
- Ormond
- Booth St
- Lowood Rd
- Mt Barker Rd
- Oatlands Rd
- Inactive area due to industrial nature

6.7 Movement Network

Mount Barker benefits from good north-to-south connectivity, with Lowood Road providing a relatively seamless and enjoyable walking experience. This street functions as a key pedestrian spine, facilitating movement through the heart of the town and connecting important destinations. However, east-to-west connectivity is notably poor, with significant barriers such as the rail lines and Albany Highway restricting the movement of pedestrians and cyclists. These obstacles make it challenging for residents and visitors to navigate the town efficiently, creating a sense of disconnection between its eastern and western sides.

The varying quality of footpath infrastructure further exacerbates this issue. While some streets feature well-maintained, wide thoroughfares that are comfortable and accessible, others lack footpaths entirely, forcing pedestrians to share space with vehicles. This inconsistency impacts safety and discourages walking as a viable mode of transport, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, parents with prams, and individuals with mobility aids.

For cyclists, the town's infrastructure can feel fragmented and insufficiently developed. The limited availability of dedicated cycling lanes and paths often forces cyclists to navigate busy roads shared with vehicles, creating safety concerns and reducing the overall appeal of cycling. Central areas, particularly around key crossing points and commercial zones, are prone to congestion, further complicating safe passage for cyclists. The lack of clear, connected cycling routes also means navigation is less intuitive, deterring potential cyclists and reducing the use of more sustainable forms of transport.

Additionally, linking cyclists to the network of trails in the surrounding area remains unclear and underdeveloped. These trails are a significant asset, offering opportunities for recreation, tourism, and connectivity with the natural environment. Improving wayfinding, signage, and designated routes to these trails would not only enhance the experience for cyclists but also encourage more visitors to explore the region sustainably. A comprehensive strategy to improve cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, address connectivity barriers, and integrate local trail systems into the town's movement network would significantly boost accessibility, safety, and the overall liveability of Mount Barker.

Opportunities

(1) Improved east west connections

Improve east west connections across the railway line for pedestrians.

(2) Connect fragmented paths

Improve connectivity and accessibility for pedestrians by connecting fragmented footpath networks and cycling infrastructure.

Estimates 500 Vehicles turning into Lowood Rd each day

Narpund Rd

Albany Hwy

Muir St

Langton Rd

Osborne Rd

Hassell St

Ormond Rd

Lowood Rd

Booth St

Mt Barker Rd

Oatlands Rd

Vehicle Movement Network

Legend

- Highway
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Retail Centre
- Car parking

Active Transport Network

Legend

- Cycle Routes
- Linkages Across Rail Lines
- Future Linkages Across Rail Lines
- Footpaths

Site

- |||||||||||| Railway

6.8 Street Furniture Audit

The street furniture and other street elements in Mount Barker display some variations that may indicate the ad-hoc way street improvements have been provided in the town over time. Some elements of the street furniture have a rural or historical character.

Street furniture

There is a general lack of basic street furniture amenities in the streets of Mount Barker. These amenities include public seating, water fountains and bins. There is an opportunity to undertake a review of street furniture to identify gaps in the provision. There is also an opportunity to standardise the street furniture over time, through a Council street furniture palette. This will ensure that over time the furniture in the town is of a similar style and quality, rather than different between different public spaces and facilities.

Lighting

There are several different street lighting styles present into the town. Some elements represent agricultural or heritage styles. There is an opportunity to rationalise the lighting palette in the future, so that as improvements and changes are made over time there is consistency to the lighting style in the town.

Signage and Interpretation

There are many different signage styles present in the town that relate to heritage signage, wayfinding and interpretation of places. These signs display different character such as the rural and historical elements of the town. There is an opportunity for the town to review its signage to develop a branding strategy that can be used, when planning to replace existing signage or create new signage. A branding strategy would help to foster the identity of Mount Barker while also improving the aesthetics of the signage in the town.

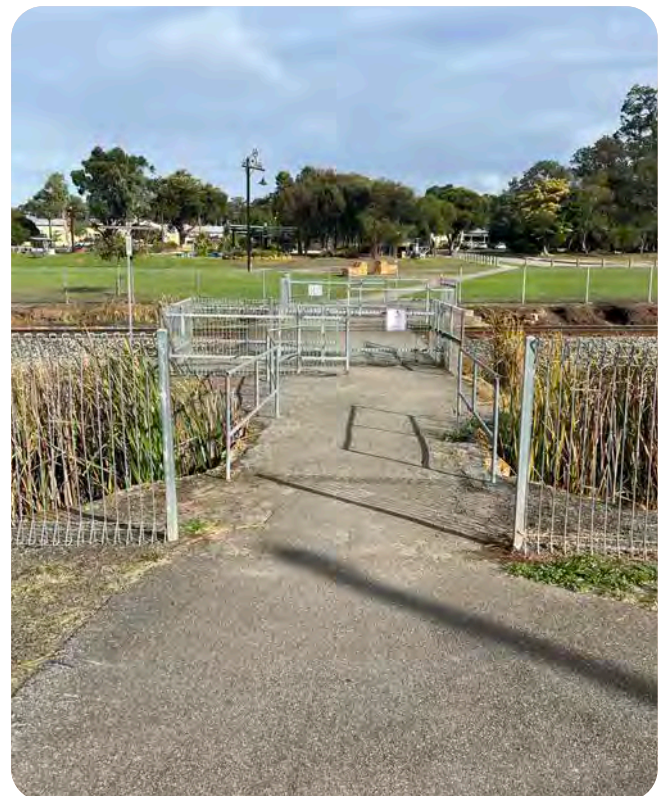IMAGE: SIGNAGE STYLE

IMAGE: BUS STOP

IMAGE: RAIL CROSSING

IMAGE: LIGHTING STYLE

IMAGE: LIGHTING STYLE

IMAGE: LIGHTING STYLE

IMAGE: SIGNAGE STYLE

IMAGE: RAILWAY CROSSING SIGN

IMAGE: HISTORIC LANDMARK

IMAGE: INTERPRETATIVE SIGNAGE

IMAGE: RAILWAY CROSSING SIGN

IMAGE: TYPICAL STREET

IMAGE: PUBLIC TOILETS

The town site has an identifiable personality that appears to be driven by three distinct themes. These themes directly reflect the core of the place and the stories of its past. Continuing to celebrate these themes, as outlined below, would be appropriate, as these stories are still considered relevant today.

Industry + Agriculture

Throughout the town, there is artwork and material choices that speak to Mount Barker's agricultural past. Historic industries included sheep and wool production, farming, timber and sawmills, and fruit orchards. More recently, the Mount Barker economy has evolved, transitioning from traditional farming practices to a more diversified mix of viticulture, horticulture, and tourism, while still retaining its roots in the livestock and timber industries.

Natural Assets

Mount Barker boasts several natural assets that contribute significantly to the character of the town. These include Mount Barker Hill, Stirling Range National Park, and the Porongurup Range. Additionally, the vineyards, farmlands, waterways, and native flora and fauna are features of the town's built form.
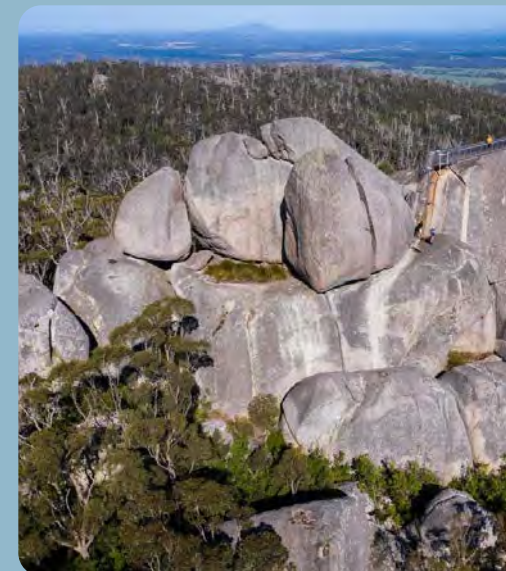
Heritage Architecture

Heritage architecture significantly contributes to the physical character of Mount Barker's public realm by preserving historical identity and enhancing visual appeal. The town features various heritage styles, including Victorian, Federation, and Inter-war architecture. Victorian buildings, with their ornate façades and intricate detailing, add a sense of grandeur and history. Federation-style structures, characterised by their gabled roofs and decorative timberwork, provide a distinct Australian identity, while Inter-war buildings, often with Art Deco influences, add a touch of early 20th-century modernity. These diverse architectural styles create a rich tapestry that distinguishes Mount Barker from more modern developments, offering unique aesthetic appeal and historical continuity.

INDUSTRY + AGRICULTURE

NATURAL ASSETS

HERITAGE ARCHITECTURE

7.0

Strategy

7.1 The Vision

"Nestled in nature, Mount Barker Town Centre stands as the heart of our community. Here, the threads of connection and resilience weave through every path and street. Through the public realm we create and nurture a culturally safe place where our artfulness, agricultural roots, and the warmth of our community is celebrated."

COUNTRY CHEMIST

CREATING BEAUTY

MT BARKER COUNTRY CHEMIST

Creating Beauty

7.2 Public Realm Drivers

"Great public spaces are ones that help people connect and thrive socially and culturally. They reflect what the community really wants and who they are. They also symbolize the history and dreams of the community."

NATURE

Mount Barker celebrates the areas natural beauty where people thrive in harmony with the rugged, mountainous terrain. It is a place where nature is a priority.

AGRICULTURE

Understanding that Mount Barker is eternally tied to agriculture. It runs deep into the heart of the community and continues to shape the Town and people that live there.

NUCLEUS OF PUBLIC LIFE

Mount Barker town site is an essential part of the life of its community. It is a place where activity and life are focussed in the region.

THE BEST OF MOUNTAIN COUNTRY SPIRIT

Mount Barker is a ruggedly vibrant place, with a dynamic and lively community spirit. It is a place where people are full of life and resilience.

EMBRACING

Mount Barker is an open hearted place where people are welcomed with open arms. The culture of past inhabitants, both Indigenous and early white settlers, are celebrated whilst leaving room for new experiences.

7.3 Approach

Mount Barker's public realm strategy is envisioned as a transformative journey, designed to enrich the town's vibrant character and foster a cohesive community experience. This strategy unfolds in four pivotal steps, each addressing essential elements of connectivity, activity, and comfort within the town centre.
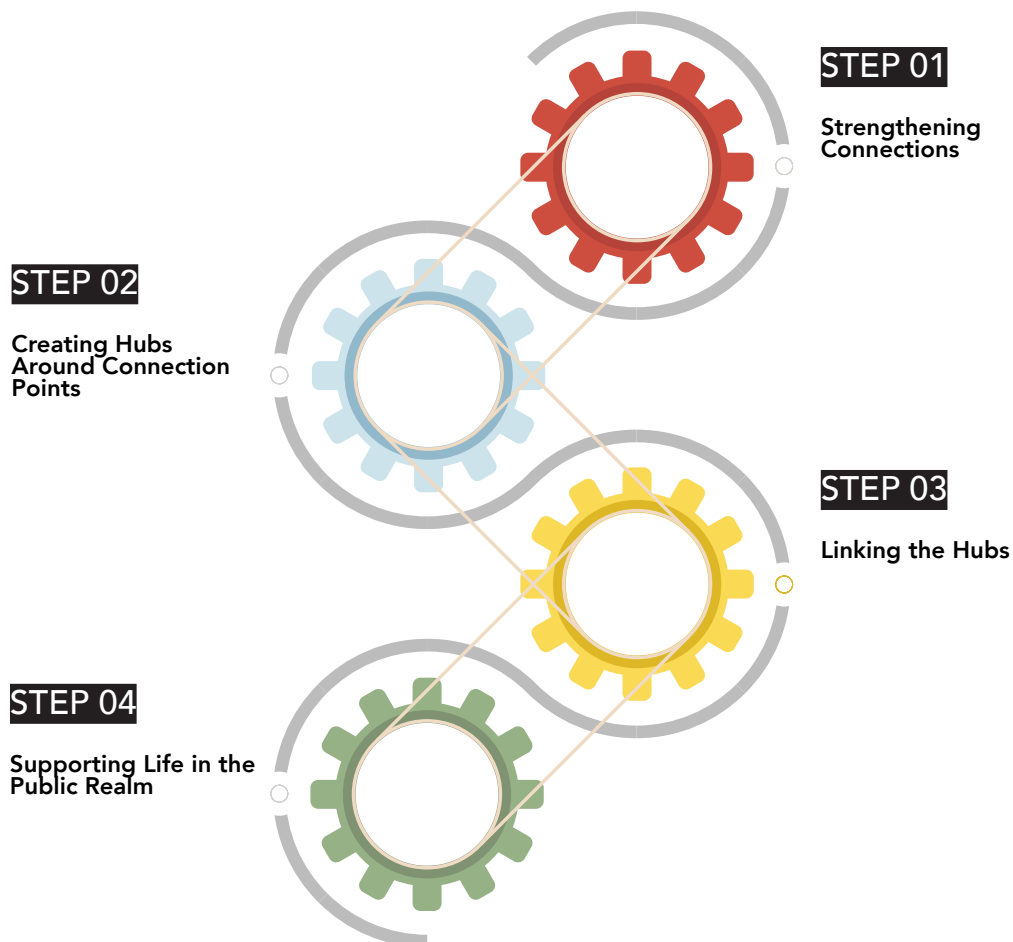
Strengthening Connections is the foundational step, focusing on enhancing the east-to-west and north-to-south movement networks throughout Mount Barker. By refining these key connections, we lay the groundwork for a more navigable and engaging town centre. This step ensures that the flow of movement through the town is intuitive and seamless, setting the stage for the success of subsequent strategies

The next step, **Creating Hubs of Activity**, revolves around strategically positioning vibrant focal points at the critical connection nodes. Understanding where people naturally gather allows us to concentrate activity around these hubs, fostering dynamic and lively areas that invigorate the community. These hubs become the heartbeats of local life, amplifying the town's social and cultural pulse.

Following the creation of these hubs, **Linking the Hubs** becomes paramount. Like a carefully strung pearl necklace, each hub is interconnected to ensure a smooth and enjoyable journey through Mount Barker. This connectivity not only enhances the town's walkability but also provides a rich tapestry of experiences, allowing residents and visitors to seamlessly explore and appreciate the diverse offerings of the town centre.

Finally, **Supporting Life in the Public Realm** focuses on ensuring that the amenities and environment cater to the comfort and delight of all users. By providing thoughtful and inviting spaces, we enhance the overall quality of life, allowing individuals to move through the town with joy and ease. This step reinforces the town's commitment to creating a welcoming and engaging public realm where every interaction is a positive experience.

Together, these steps form a comprehensive strategy aimed at fostering a connected, vibrant, and supportive public realm that truly embodies the spirit of Mount Barker.

STEP 01

Strengthening Connections

STEP 02

Creating Hubs Around Connection Points

STEP 03

Linking the Hubs

STEP 04

Supporting Life in the Public Realm

7.4 Hierarchy of Street Users

What is the Mobility Pyramid?

The mobility pyramid for street users, often referred to as the transportation hierarchy, prioritises different modes of transportation based on their sustainability, efficiency, and impact on urban environments. At the top of the pyramid are pedestrians, who are given the highest priority due to the minimal space they require and their zero environmental impact. Following pedestrians are cyclists, who also have low environmental footprints and can travel efficiently over short to medium distances. Public transport occupies the next level, as it can move large numbers of people efficiently and with lower emissions per capita compared to private vehicles.

Private vehicles, including cars and motorcycles, are near the bottom due to their higher environmental impact, space requirements, and lower efficiency in moving people. At the base of the pyramid are freight and delivery vehicles, which, while essential for goods transport, have significant impacts on traffic congestion and environmental sustainability. This hierarchy aims to create more liveable, sustainable, and efficient urban environments by prioritising the most eco-friendly and space-efficient modes of transportation.

MOBILITY PYRAMID

Walking

Cycling + Micromobility

Public Transport

Shared Cars

Private Cars

Freight Vehicles
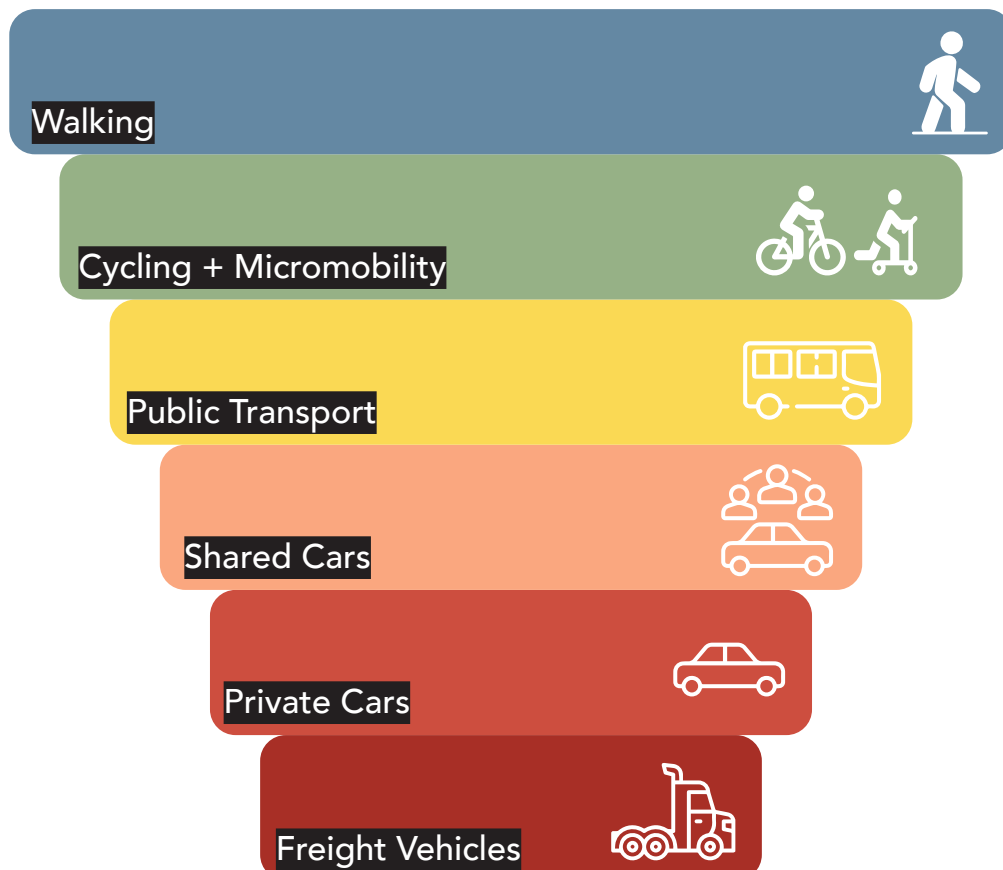
Why use the Mobility Pyramid as a Decision Making Tool?

Planning streets according to the mobility pyramid is crucial for several reasons, contributing to the overall liveability, sustainability, and efficiency of urban environments. By prioritising the most efficient and environmentally friendly modes of transportation, cities can improve public health, reduce traffic congestion, support economic growth, and enhance the overall quality of life for their residents. A summary of these benefits is as follows.

01 Environmental Sustainability

- Reduction in Emissions: Prioritising walking, cycling, and public transport helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, as these modes are significantly more eco-friendly compared to private vehicles.
- Encouraging Green Modes: By designing streets that favour non-motorised transport, towns can encourage people to choose greener transportation options, leading to long-term environmental benefits.

02 Public Health

- Active Lifestyles: Streets designed with pedestrians and cyclists in mind promote physical activity, which can reduce health issues such as obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes.

- Improved Air Quality: Reduced reliance on private vehicles leads to lower emissions, resulting in better air quality and fewer respiratory problems among residents.

03 Traffic Efficiency

- Reduced Congestion: Prioritising public transport and non-motorised transport modes can alleviate traffic congestion, as fewer cars on the road mean less traffic and shorter travel times for everyone.

- Efficient Use of Space: Streets designed for pedestrians and cyclists use space more efficiently, allowing for smoother traffic flow and better utilisation of urban areas.

04 Economic Benefits

- Cost Savings: Investing in infrastructure for walking, cycling, and public transport can be more cost-effective than building and maintaining extensive road networks for private vehicles.

- Boosting Local Businesses: Walkable streets with good cycling infrastructure can attract more foot traffic, benefiting local businesses and contributing to vibrant local economies.

05 Social Equity

- Accessibility for All: Designing streets with a focus on pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport ensures that everyone, including those who cannot afford a car or choose not to drive, can access essential services and opportunities.

- Inclusivity: Streets that prioritise non-motorised transport and public transit cater to a diverse population, including children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, fostering a more inclusive community.

06 Safety

- Reduced Accidents: Streets designed for lower speeds and with dedicated lanes for pedestrians and cyclists can significantly reduce the number and severity of traffic accidents.

- Safer Environments: Prioritising pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure creates safer environments, encouraging more people to walk and cycle, which in turn increases the visibility and safety of these modes.

07 Quality of Life

- Enhanced Public Spaces: Streets that prioritise people over cars often feature more public spaces, such as parks, plazas, and pedestrian zones, which enhance the quality of life for residents.

- Community Interaction: Walkable and bike-friendly streets promote social interaction, helping to build a stronger sense of community and belonging.

7.5 Step 01 Strengthening Connections

Focusing on enhancing the east-to-west and north-to-south movement networks throughout Mount Barker. By refining these key connections, we lay the groundwork for a more navigable and engaging town centre.

① **Heritage Dam Walking Trail**

The natural bush setting of the historic Government Dam - constructed from 1889 to service the railway - provides an opportunity to link the tourist accommodation to Lowood Road. By re-establishing a walking trail from the caravan park and motel to the town centre, the Shire can encourage less reliance on cars for people visiting the area.

② **Recognising the Northern Tourism Hub**

Acknowledging the presence of the accommodation and key heritage destinations at the northern entrance to the town by creating a visual link between the providers is important. Marking this as an area of tourism is crucial. Connecting visitors to the main town via walking trails should be prioritised.

③ **Northern Entrance**

This entrance is one of three key eastern gateways into the town centre. It presents an opportunity to celebrate the town's identity through public art, distinctive and iconic wayfinding signage, and clear expressions of the town's 'brand,' creating a compelling invitation for visitors to explore the heart of the community. Existing hardscape elements, such as the rock wall and heritage references, provide a strong foundation to build upon. The existing grassed areas should be enhanced and expanded with a refined, sophisticated design that aligns with the town's character and image. Collaborating with local artists and historical groups is recommended to ensure the space reflects and celebrates the town's unique stories and culture. While the current wayfinding signage is visually appealing, it is noted that it may be challenging to read at speed. Refinements should prioritise both aesthetics and functionality to ensure clarity and ease of navigation.

④ **Mid Entrance**

This area should provide a comfortable and inviting walking environment, supported by prominent wayfinding markers and clear connections to the town's main attractions. It is particularly important that the space accommodates visitors during the trial free camping period. Recent improvements, including the installation of wide, walkable verges and footpaths, have enhanced accessibility. However, the existing park and District Hall remain underutilised and could be better activated and integrated into the town's fabric. A future redesign of the park should honour the heritage of the existing memorial while incorporating modern elements to creatively and engagingly tell more of the town's story. This approach would complement any future free camping facilities, creating a cohesive and welcoming experience for visitors.

⑤ **Town Centre East to West Crossing**

See detailed explanation overleaf.

⑥ **Wilson Park Rail Crossing No. 1**

Enhance the legibility of this crossing by accentuating it with strategic planting and a thoughtful escalation of built form. Incorporate wayfinding signage that provides clear walking distances and highlights the location of nearby attractions. Ensure the crossing is seamlessly connected to the broader regional path network, promoting accessibility and integration.

⑦ **Southern Entrance**

The southern entrance from Albany Highway should serve as an inviting gateway, enticing visitors into the town centre. This key entry point can be elevated with striking public art that reflects the town's identity and captures the attention of those passing through. Surrounding natural assets should be enhanced with carefully selected landscaping that complements the area's character and creates a welcoming atmosphere. To support active transport, pedestrian and cycling amenities should be provided and seamlessly integrated into the regional network. These improvements will ensure safe and accessible crossing points, encouraging exploration of the town centre while reinforcing its connection to the broader area.
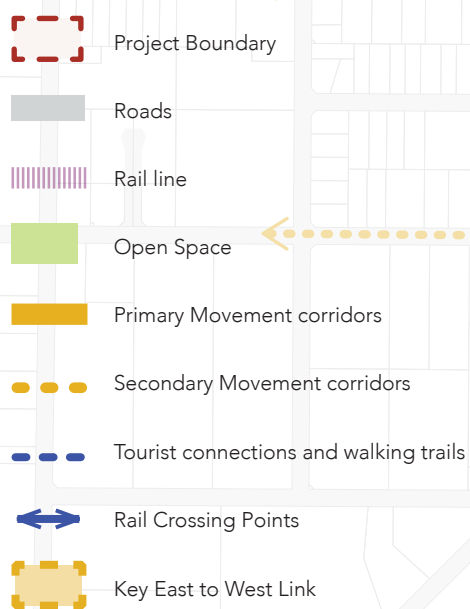
⑧ **Langton Entrance**

This street is the fourth major entrance to the town and supports a secondary retail strip, primarily serving visitors from the surrounding region. It should act as a clear marker of arrival into the town centre, creating a strong sense of destination as the secondary retail area. The streetscape should transition with increasingly elevated design and form as it approaches the town centre, encouraging movement further into the heart of the town and enhancing its appeal as a welcoming gateway.

⑨ **Secondary Link Streets**

These streets form part of the secondary movement network, supporting the primary streets and connecting key destinations within the town. While they may not require the same level of treatment as primary movement corridors, they should still offer well-shaded environments, quality footpaths, and comfortable spaces for walking and cycling to ensure accessibility and usability for all.

⑩ **Short-cut Link**

The existing movement patterns through this space should be formalised with the addition of a footpath, providing a safe and defined pedestrian link. This route is frequently used, particularly by schoolchildren, making its improvement a priority.

Legend

- **[----]** Project Boundary
- **[ ]** Roads
- **[||||]** Rail line
- **[ ]** Open Space
- **─────** Primary Movement corridors
- **· · · · ·** Secondary Movement corridors
- **– – –** Tourist connections and walking trails
- **◄──►** Rail Crossing Points
- **[ ]** Key East to West Link

Map labels: Narpund Rd, Osborne Rd, Hassell St, Ormond Rd, Booth St, Oatlands Rd, Muir St, Marion St, Mt Barker Rd, Mondurup St, Lowood Rd, ...gton Rd, ...y Hwy

(11) **Cemetery Trail**

Recognising and formalising the provision of a walk/cycle trail connecting to the cemetery. Where possible, this should utilise existing trails adjacent to the road, rather than roadside. This will improve the user's enjoyment of the journey.

(12) **North - South Recreation Trail**

Strengthening the north-to-south movement network by ensuring all future POS designs at Wilson Park provide for a north-to-south pedestrian link. Ensuring that existing infrastructure supports safe and comfortable movement.

(5) **Town Centre East to West Crossing**

The most significant rail crossing in Mount Barker occurs at the historic rail platform, a central landmark within the heart of the town. Currently, this space is designed to prioritise vehicle movement, which inadvertently limits pedestrian access and convenience. Pedestrians are forced to walk out of their way to move through the space, navigating busy vehicle and caravan parking bays and manoeuvring around the IGA delivery zone. This creates an unwelcoming and fragmented experience, especially for those on foot.

Given the town's aspiration to become a more connected and vibrant community hub, this crossing represents a critical opportunity for improvement. It not only serves as a key link between different parts of the town centre but also holds historical and cultural significance. Enhancing this area to prioritise pedestrian safety and comfort would not only improve day-to-day life for residents but also create a more welcoming space for tourists exploring Mount Barker.

Images (Top to Bottom)

1) Temporary line marking to denote the area as a shared space.

2) Improved rail crossings that prioritise pedestrian movement

Delivery trucks utilise the roadway to access and reverse into the delivery bay.

Level pedestrian crossing provided.

Pedestrians must walk beyond vehicle parking before crossing into Town.

No clear pedestrian movement network causes friction between users

Vehicle parking is provided along the fence, providing additional barriers to legible movement through the space.

Tourist Bus Stop

Improved wayfinding

IGA Delivery Area

IGA Car Park

Path to

Railway Platform

Remove parking and improve pedestrian safety connection

Path to town centre

Pedestrian access improvement opportunity from Train Station to Town Centre

Public Realm Material + Furniture Palette

The selection of materials and public furniture plays a crucial role in shaping the character and functionality of the public realm. A consistent and thoughtful palette not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of spaces but also ensures they are durable, comfortable, and fit for purpose. Materials should reflect the local context, drawing inspiration from Mount Barker's natural landscape and heritage, while also considering sustainability and long-term maintenance. Public furniture - such as seating, lighting, and waste bins - should be cohesive, functional, and welcoming, designed to support comfort and social interaction. By aligning the material and furniture palette with the town's identity, we create inviting spaces that feel grounded in place and cater to the needs of both locals and visitors.

Natural Palette

Agricultural Palette
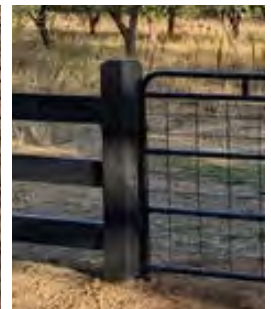
Heritage Palette
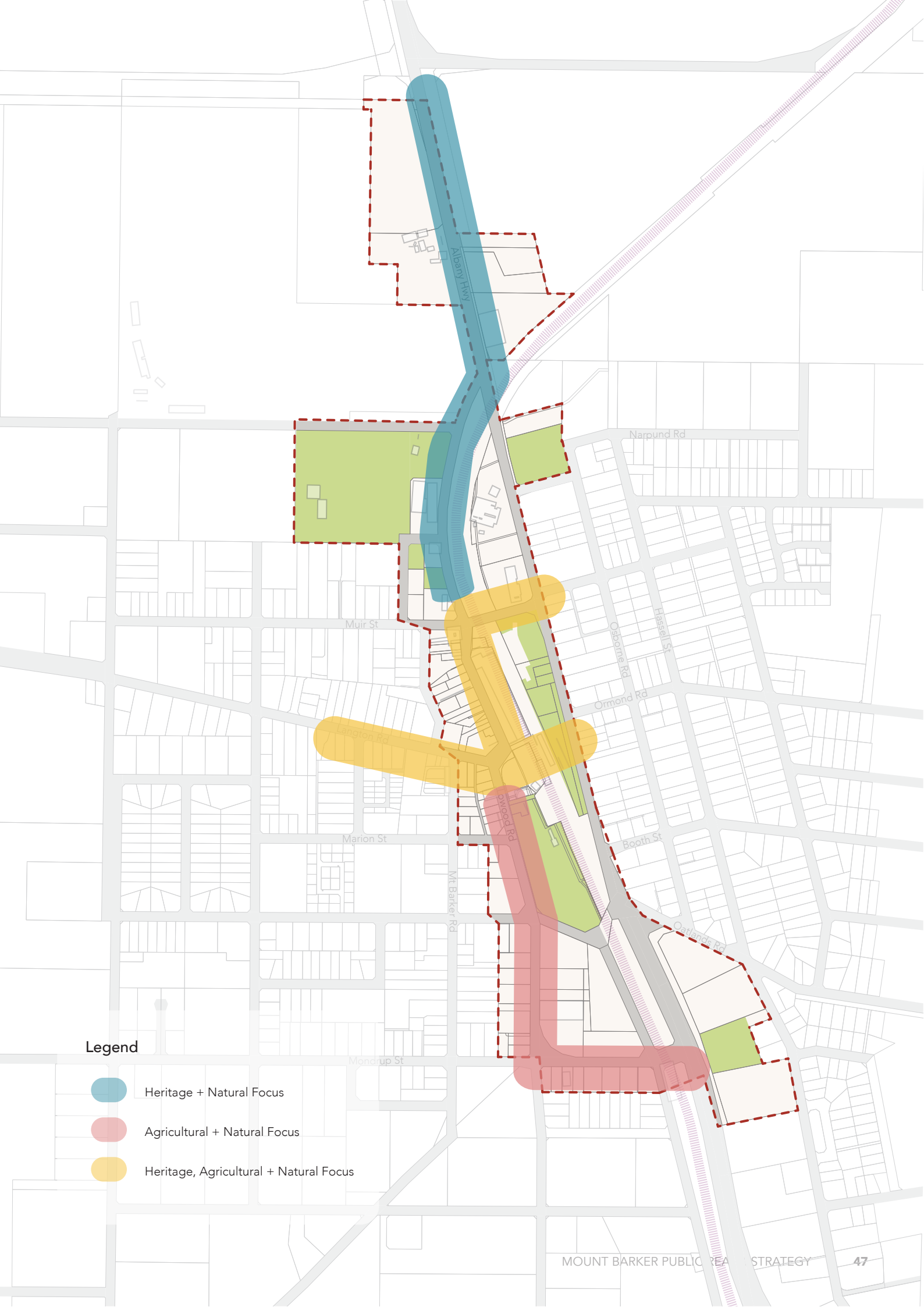
Legend

● Heritage + Natural Focus

● Agricultural + Natural Focus

● Heritage, Agricultural + Natural Focus

7.6 Step 02 Creating Hubs of Activity

Strategically positioning vibrant focal points at the critical connection nodes. Understanding where people naturally gather allows us to concentrate activity around these hubs, fostering dynamic and lively areas that invigorate the community.

① Bakery Hub

The bakery serves as a key attraction and hub of activity in this part of town. There is potential to enhance its role by improving parking facilities for visitors and creating inviting spaces where people can relax and enjoy their meals.

The underutilised parcel of land opposite the bakery presents an opportunity to support these improvements. Given the area's predominantly industrial land use and the need to focus on activating the retail core, this hub should aim to complement existing land uses by providing an open space that enhances local amenities and creates a more welcoming environment.

② Wilson Park Hub

Wilson Park is currently undergoing a master planning process with the goal of creating a versatile community open space that offers recreational opportunities for people of all ages. A key focus of the master plan is the inclusion of play spaces designed for both young children and youth. The park is envisioned to become an iconic landmark for the town, reflecting its identity and providing a vibrant space for the community to enjoy.

③ Town Centre Core

This area is the heart of the town and its primary hub of activity. Commercial services should prioritise meeting the daily needs of residents, such as postal and banking facilities, while also supporting and showcasing local businesses. Preserving heritage buildings and maintaining the charm of fine-grain retail shopfronts is essential to retain the character of the town centre. Activation efforts should begin with this core area, focusing on bridging the divide between the eastern and western sides of the town to create a more cohesive and vibrant space.

The Civic Centre Gardens should be enhanced as a pivotal "hinge" in the town centre. This space has the potential to become a key event venue and a welcoming place where people can freely spend time, relax, and enjoy the town centre. Thoughtful design and programming of this area will strengthen its role as a central gathering point for the community.

Encouraging businesses to extend their presence into public areas - spilling out onto the streets with outdoor seating, displays, or activities - will bring the area to life, showcasing the community in action and fostering a sense of connection and vibrancy.

④ District Hall Hub

The District Hall hub is strategically positioned to support both community and commercial activation. Its location at the entrance to the town centre from Albany Highway, alongside Centenary Park, ensures a high volume of people passing through, though few currently spend time in the area.

Introducing a free camping space could activate the hub, drawing visitors to linger longer and explore the town. Enhancements to Centenary Park could further enrich the space by telling the story of the area, encouraging those parked at the District Hall to venture deeper into the town centre.

Memorial Drive, the District Hall, and Centenary Gardens collectively have the potential to evolve into a vibrant event precinct, capable of hosting large-scale community events and serving as a focal point for gatherings and celebrations.

⑤ Sporting Hub

The clustering of sporting, community, and club facilities in this area should be acknowledged and supported as a vital aspect of the town's identity. This space will primarily serve local residents and visitors from nearby towns.

Celebrating the town's sporting history and recognising local community champions through meaningful public art will add character and cultural significance to the area. By focusing on showcasing the community's strengths and achievements, this space can be further enriched, fostering pride and a sense of belonging for both residents and visitors.

⑥ Tourist Activity Hub

This entrance serves as a vital activity hub focused on visitor services, including museums and accommodation. It presents an opportunity to create a welcoming and memorable first impression, ensuring visitors feel connected to the town and inspired to explore beyond their accommodation.

Public art, wayfinding signage, and creating a cohesive public realm will bring this hub together.

Legend

- - - - Project Boundary

▬▬▬ Roads

▥▥▥ Rail lines

▦ Open Space

⟷ Rail Crossing Points

⬬ Hub of activation

A Note on a Potential Free Camping Trial Program

Mount Barker has a strong history of welcoming travellers, once offering a free overnight camping area that served as a convenient stop for tourists. This space allowed visitors to rest while contributing to the local economy. Building on this legacy, we propose reintroducing a free overnight camping area for self-contained caravans, with a maximum stay limit of 48 hours. This initiative taps into the growing trend of caravanning and has the potential to benefit both visitors and the town.

To ensure the success of this project, we recommend a 12-month trial period. This will allow time to assess the impact on the community and local businesses, and to gather feedback to make improvements. The location of the camping area should be close to town, providing easy access to local shops, restaurants, and amenities, which will encourage visitors to spend time and money in the community. While the area would be for self-contained caravans, adding basic facilities such as waste disposal points and water refilling stations would enhance the experience without placing too much demand on resources.

Clear signage should be installed to outline the 48-hour limit, local regulations, and guidelines for responsible use of the site. Additionally, providing information on the town's attractions could encourage visitors to explore Mount Barker further. Engaging local businesses in the process, perhaps through offering discounts or services for caravan travellers, would integrate the site into the local economy and foster community support.

By reintroducing a free camping space for short-term stays, Mount Barker can enhance its reputation as a welcoming town for travellers. The proposed trial will allow the Shire to refine the project, ensuring it benefits the community and strengthens the local tourism industry.

7.7 Step 03 Linking the Hubs

Like a carefully strung pearl necklace, each hub is interconnected, allowing residents and visitors to seamlessly explore and appreciate the diverse offerings of the town centre.

Movement + Place Based Road Classifications

Applying a hierarchy of road classifications that considers both movement and place needs is crucial for effectively linking hubs of activity. This approach ensures that each road is designed and managed according to its primary role - whether as a connector facilitating efficient movement or as a destination supporting social interaction and activity. By clearly defining the function of each road within the network, resources can be allocated appropriately to balance traffic flow, safety, and placemaking. For example, primary movement corridors can prioritise high-capacity travel with safe crossings, while secondary streets can emphasise pedestrian and cycling comfort, fostering connections between hubs. This hierarchy creates a coherent network that supports seamless movement while enhancing the character and vibrancy of spaces between hubs, encouraging people to explore and engage with their surroundings. An explanation of the categories applied to the Town of Mount Barker is included overleaf.

The road hierarchy in Mount Barker is designed to balance movement and place, ensuring that each street is optimised for its primary function while contributing to the town's broader urban framework. At the top of the hierarchy are primary movement corridors, such as Albany Highway, which prioritise efficient vehicle flow, particularly for freight and long-distance travellers, while providing safe pedestrian crossings to maintain connectivity. Connector streets, including key roads like Langton and Lowood, serve as vital links between residential, commercial, and activity hubs, supporting moderate movement while integrating essential place-making elements like footpaths and landscaping. Activity streets or boulevards strike a balance between movement and interaction, offering a mix of uses that encourage social engagement and economic activity alongside active transport options. Finally, local streets prioritise liveability, fostering community connection with features such as wide footpaths, shaded environments, and traffic calming measures. This layered approach ensures a seamless and safe experience for all users, promotes sustainable transport modes, and strengthens the integration of public spaces into the fabric of the town. By clearly defining the function of each street within this hierarchy, Mount Barker can enhance accessibility, safety, and vibrancy throughout the public realm.

**Providing for Landmark Buildings**

Landmark buildings play a crucial role in guiding movement between activity hubs by acting as visually distinct anchors within the townscape. Strategically placed at key intersections or transitions, they aid wayfinding while enhancing the experience of moving through the town. These buildings should stand out through unique architectural features and reflect the town's identity, serving both functional and aesthetic purposes. By housing community facilities, public art, or gathering spaces, they not only support navigation but also create vibrant points of interest that connect and enrich the urban environment.

Activity Programming

Hosting events and festivals that span multiple hubs can serve as a dynamic way to link them, encouraging people to explore the spaces in between and engage with diverse activities. For instance, a food festival might feature pop-up stalls at various hubs, connected by themed walking routes, while a community art event could include installations or live performances along the pathways. Interactive features further enhance these connections by making the journey itself engaging. Play spaces for children, street performers, temporary markets, or art installations placed strategically along connecting routes transform them into active, vibrant spaces. These elements not only draw people to the hubs but also enrich their experience of moving between them, fostering a sense of discovery and strengthening the overall sense of place.

New Street Trees

Planting new street trees to increase Mount Barker's urban canopy is a vital strategy to enhance the town's "nestled in nature" character while delivering environmental, aesthetic, and social benefits. By prioritising trees in all built environment projects, the Shire can take an incremental approach, ensuring consistent progress over time. This means allocating budgets specifically for tree planting and incorporating greening initiatives into streetscape designs, road upgrades, and new developments. Trees will not only provide shade and improve walkability but also enhance biodiversity, reduce urban heat, and create visually appealing streetscapes that reflect the town's unique identity. Through this methodical and integrated approach, Mount Barker can build a greener, healthier, and more inviting urban environment, reinforcing its connection to the natural landscape.
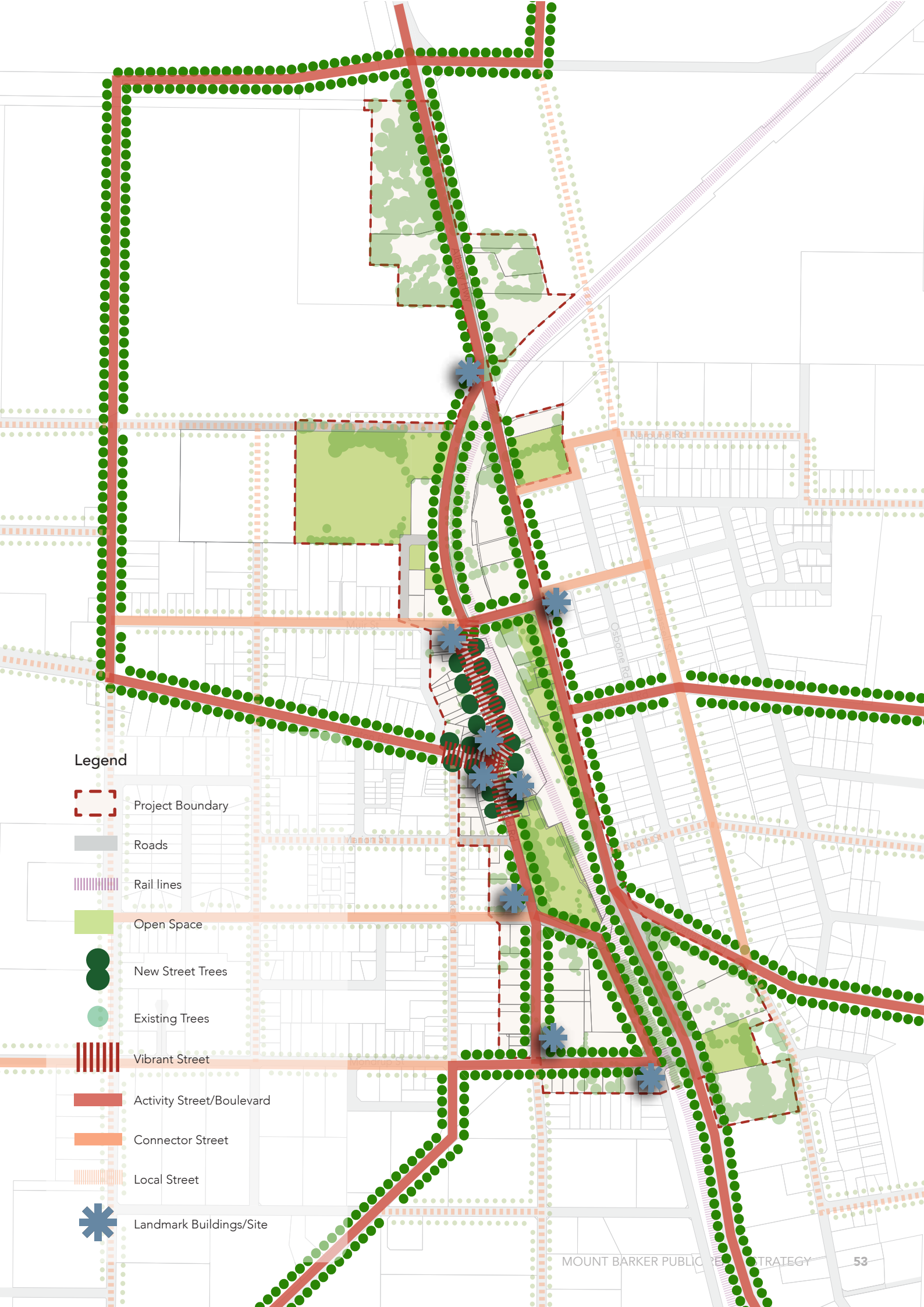
Legend

- ⬚ Project Boundary
- ▬ Roads
- ▦ Rail lines
- ▦ Open Space
- ⬤ New Street Trees
- ⬤ Existing Trees
- ▦ Vibrant Street
- ▬ Activity Street/Boulevard
- ▬ Connector Street
- ▦ Local Street
- ✳ Landmark Buildings/Site

Vibrant Street
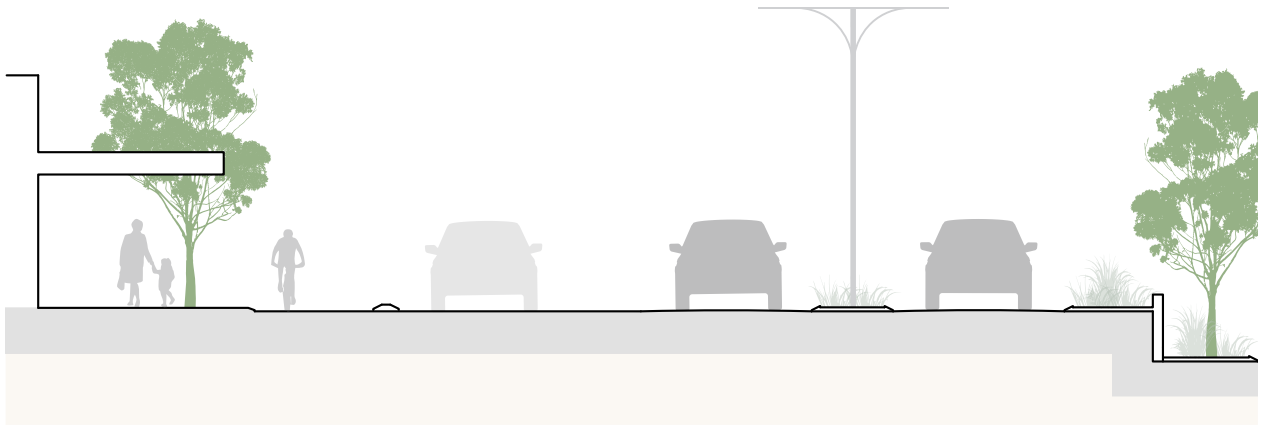
A vibrant street seamlessly balances its role as a connector and a destination, supporting active movement while fostering social interaction and engagement. Designed with people in mind, it features wide footpaths, seating, and shade, creating a welcoming and comfortable environment. A mix of uses - such as cafés, shops, markets, public art, and gathering spaces - encourages visitors to linger and interact, while social spaces like outdoor seating, plazas, and parklets transform the street into a dynamic hub. Flexibility is key, allowing the street to accommodate efficient movement alongside areas for gathering and interaction. Shared zones promote slower traffic and increased pedestrian activity, while the space can adapt to host events like festivals and markets, reinforcing its role as a community focal point. Reflecting local character through architecture, landscaping, and cultural elements, a vibrant street also prioritises the safety of pedestrians and cyclists through traffic-calming measures. By drawing people in and supporting local businesses, it becomes an active, inclusive, and economically thriving space.

## Activity Street/Boulevard
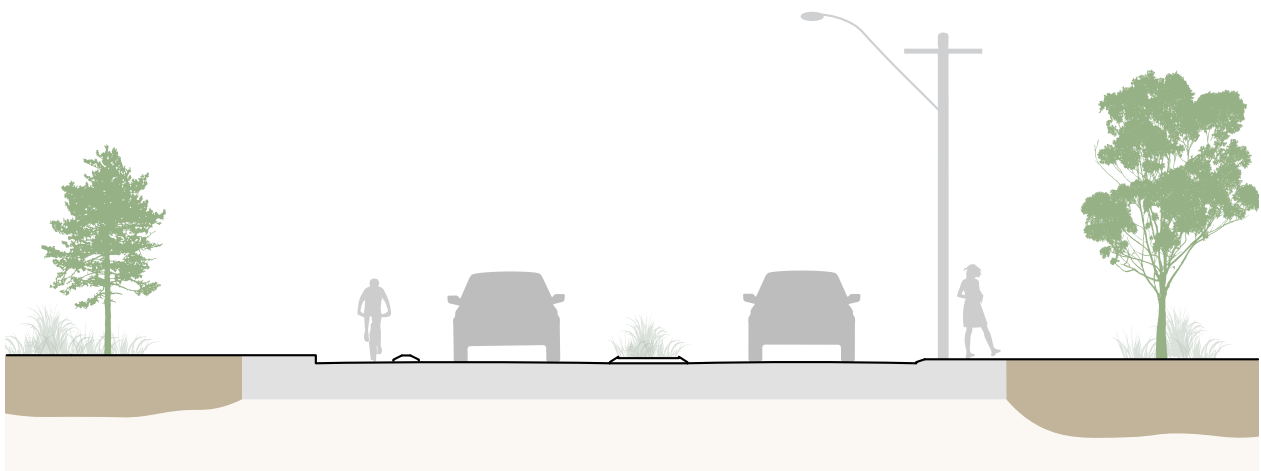
An activity street or boulevard balances its role as a primary movement corridor with its function as a place, albeit with less intensity than a vibrant street. These streets prioritise efficient movement for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians while providing spaces that support moderate levels of social interaction and economic activity. Designed for functionality and comfort, they feature well-maintained footpaths, street trees for shade, and safe crossings, ensuring accessibility for all users. Activity streets host a mix of uses, such as small-scale retail, dining, and services, creating opportunities for interaction without overwhelming the corridor's movement role. Shared spaces and carefully integrated public amenities, like seating or small plazas, enhance their role as places to pause and engage. These streets often serve as connectors between key hubs of activity, with their design reflecting the local character while maintaining the flow of movement. By striking this balance, activity streets or boulevards support both efficient travel and a sense of place, creating corridors that are practical, inviting, and contextually appropriate.

Connector Street
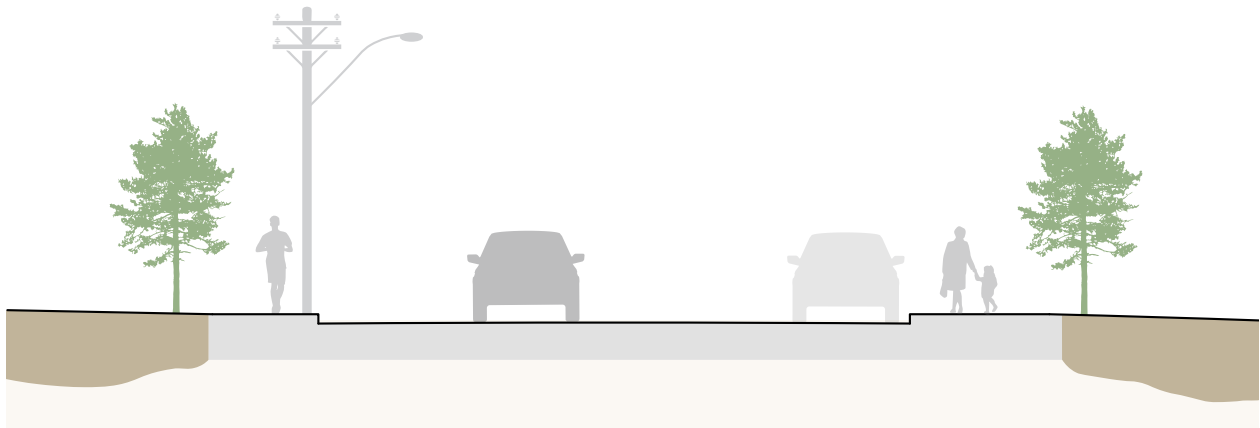
A connector street primarily functions as a local distribution corridor, prioritising movement while offering limited place-based amenities. These streets are designed to facilitate efficient travel for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians between residential, commercial, and activity hubs, serving as critical links within the local network. While the focus is on movement, some place elements, such as footpaths, street lighting, and occasional landscaping, ensure the street remains safe and accessible for all users. Connector streets typically have minimal activation, with only essential land uses or services supporting their role. Their design reflects their purpose, maintaining clear and legible routes to ensure smooth transitions through the network. By prioritising movement while incorporating basic placemaking features, connector streets efficiently link neighbourhoods and hubs, supporting the broader urban framework.

Local Street
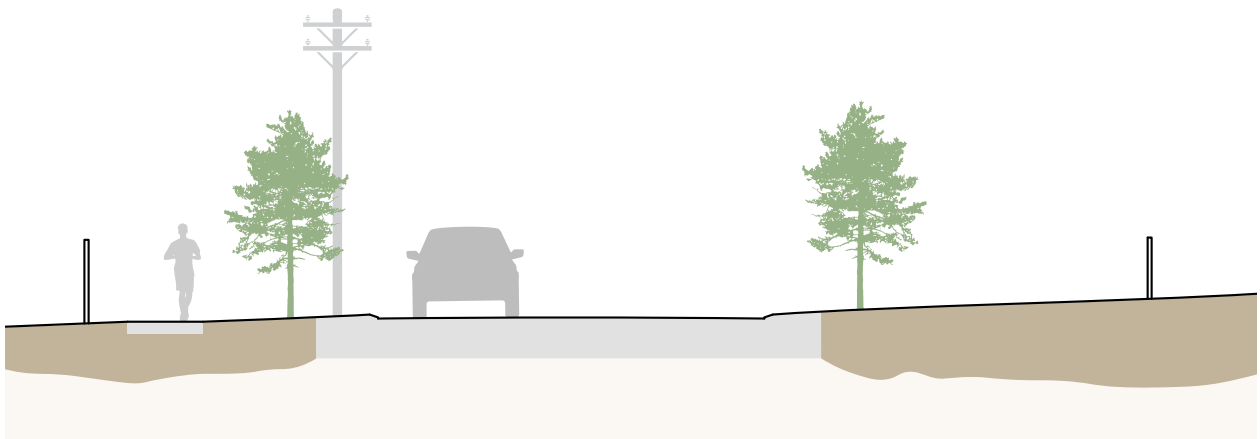
A local street in a residential area prioritises place over movement, serving primarily as a safe and welcoming environment for the people who live there. While facilitating low-volume, low-speed local traffic is important, these streets are designed to support daily life, fostering social interaction and a sense of community. Features such as wide footpaths, street trees, and landscaping create a comfortable and attractive setting, while traffic-calming measures enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly children. Local streets may include small-scale amenities like seating, play areas, or community gardens, further enriching their role as spaces for connection. By focusing on liveability and neighbourly interaction, residential streets act as extensions of the home, creating environments that prioritise the well-being and quality of life for their residents.

Walking Routes

When considering how to better connect the hubs of activity, several walking paths have been identified. The goal of these paths is to create a comfortable, safe, and enjoyable walking environment that encourages people to leave their cars and engage with the public realm. These paths are generally located in areas of natural beauty or parkland, enhancing the walking experience with scenic views and green surroundings.

It is essential that the design of these paths considers several key factors: accessibility for all users, including those with mobility challenges; appropriate lighting and signage to ensure safety and wayfinding; and integration with existing infrastructure to create seamless connections between key destinations. Additionally, the paths should be designed to enhance the natural landscape, using sustainable materials and ensuring minimal environmental impact, while also incorporating seating, shade, and other amenities that support comfort and relaxation along the way. By focusing on these elements, the walking paths will become not only functional connectors but also inviting spaces that enrich the experience of moving through the town.

Landmark Sites

The creation of landmark sites at key points throughout Mount Barker is essential for enhancing the town's identity and aiding in wayfinding. Landmark sites, distinguished by iconic architecture, public art, or gathering spaces, serve as visual anchors that help people navigate and orient themselves within the town. These prominent features not only create memorable experiences but also define key destinations, making it easier for locals and visitors to find their way. In Mount Barker, landmark sites can be strategically placed along major routes or at important intersections, reinforcing the town's character and guiding movement through the public realm.

Iconic architectural elements, such as distinctive buildings or structures, act as focal points that draw attention and invite exploration. Public art installations, reflecting the local culture and history, enrich the town's visual landscape while serving as recognisable markers for navigation. These landmarks can also double as gathering spaces, offering places for people to meet, rest, or participate in community events, thereby blending practical function with cultural expression. By investing in landmark sites, Mount Barker can elevate the town's sense of place, making it both more navigable and more vibrant.

Wayfinding Projects

Creating a legible public realm is essential for fostering a sense of place and ensuring ease of movement for both residents and visitors. Wayfinding plays a pivotal role in this, offering more than just directional signage; it shapes how people experience and navigate a space. From the development of landmark buildings and distinct public spaces that act as natural guides, to clear and intuitive signage strategies, wayfinding ensures that every journey through the town is effortless and engaging. In today's evolving landscape, wayfinding should also consider the integration of technology, such as QR codes, to provide dynamic, real-time information and enrich the visitor experience. Together, these elements create a cohesive environment that not only connects but also enhances the public realm, making it accessible and enjoyable for all.

7.8 Step 04 Supporting Life in the Public Realm

Ensuring that the amenities and environment cater to the comfort and delight of all users reinforces the Shire's commitment to creating a welcoming and engaging public realm.

1 Free RV/Caravan Trial Parking Area

The proposed free RV and caravan parking trial aims to attract off-grid travellers by offering up to 48 hours of free camping in a central location. This initiative seeks to make Mount Barker more competitive with neighbouring towns, encouraging longer visitor stays and increased local spending at shops, restaurants, and attractions. Running for 12 months, the program will assess demand, gather user feedback, and evaluate its economic impact, providing insights into the potential for long-term implementation. By engaging local businesses and fostering a welcoming environment, the trial supports Mount Barker's goals of enhancing tourism, stimulating the local economy, and strengthening its reputation as a traveller-friendly destination.

2 Corner Upgrade

The proposed project seeks to revitalise the key "hinge" corner at the intersection of Langton Road and Lowood Road, transforming it into a vibrant and inviting focal point within Mount Barker's town centre. This upgrade will enhance the corner's significance as a central gathering space by incorporating public art that reflects the town's unique character and history, creating a visually striking landmark that draws attention and fosters a sense of pride. Thoughtfully designed seating areas and landscaping will encourage people to linger longer, promoting social interaction and community connection. By blending functionality with aesthetic appeal, the project aims to improve the pedestrian experience, increase foot traffic, and support local businesses nearby. This upgraded corner will not only serve as a destination in its own right but also strengthen the flow between key activity hubs, reinforcing its role as a vital connection point within the public realm.

3 Public Art

Installing public art in key locations across Mount Barker can enhance the town's character and identity by celebrating its local history, culture, and stories. Murals, sculptures, and interactive installations serve as visual landmarks, beautifying the public realm while encouraging exploration and engagement. Public art fosters a sense of pride and belonging among residents, transforms everyday spaces into vibrant and memorable places, and stimulates the local economy by attracting visitors and supporting local artists. By integrating art that reflects Mount Barker's unique heritage, the town can create a richer, more engaging public realm for both locals and visitors.

4 Temporary Activations

Temporary and pop-up installations, such as parklets, street planter boxes, and pop-up seating areas, can play a significant role in activating Mount Barker's town centre and enhancing its sense of place. These installations are flexible and adaptable, allowing underutilised spaces to be transformed into vibrant areas for gathering, resting, and socialising. By introducing greenery, art, and seating into the streetscape, these temporary interventions can create inviting pockets of life that encourage people to linger and engage with their surroundings. They provide opportunities for experimentation and creativity, offering a low-cost and immediate way to test new ideas for public space enhancement.

These installations not only contribute to the town's aesthetic but also foster a sense of community by making the public realm more welcoming and dynamic. Parklets can turn a few parking spaces into mini urban parks, while street planters bring nature into the heart of the town, softening the urban environment and promoting a greener, healthier space. Pop-up elements can be tailored to reflect seasonal events, local culture, or community themes, creating an ever-evolving public space that remains fresh and engaging. By using temporary installations, Mount Barker can quickly and affordably enhance its public realm, fostering a stronger connection between people and place.

5 Welcome Zones

Welcome zones at key entry points to Mount Barker are pivotal in capturing the attention of travellers and announcing their arrival in the town. These areas should serve as dynamic gateways that not only signal entry into Mount Barker but also entice visitors to explore further. Positioned on busy roads, the welcome zones need to make a strong visual impact while reflecting the town's unique character and identity.

To achieve this, the welcome zones could include striking visual elements that prominently display the town's name and emblematic features. Incorporating local materials and design motifs can ground these spaces in Mount Barker's heritage and culture. Greenery and landscaping, such as colourful plantings or native species, would enhance the natural beauty and create a welcoming atmosphere. Informational displays about the town's attractions and history can provide context and pique interest. By integrating these elements, the welcome zones will not only mark the town's boundaries but also invite visitors to immerse themselves in the unique experience that Mount Barker has to offer.

Legend

- **Project Boundary**
- **Roads**
- **Rail lines**
- **Open Space**
- **Free RV/Caravan Trial Parking Area**
- **Existing Public Art**
- **New Public Art**
- **Existing Public Art**
- **Activation Opportunity**
- **Town Centre Core**
- **Potential Caravan Parking Spaces**
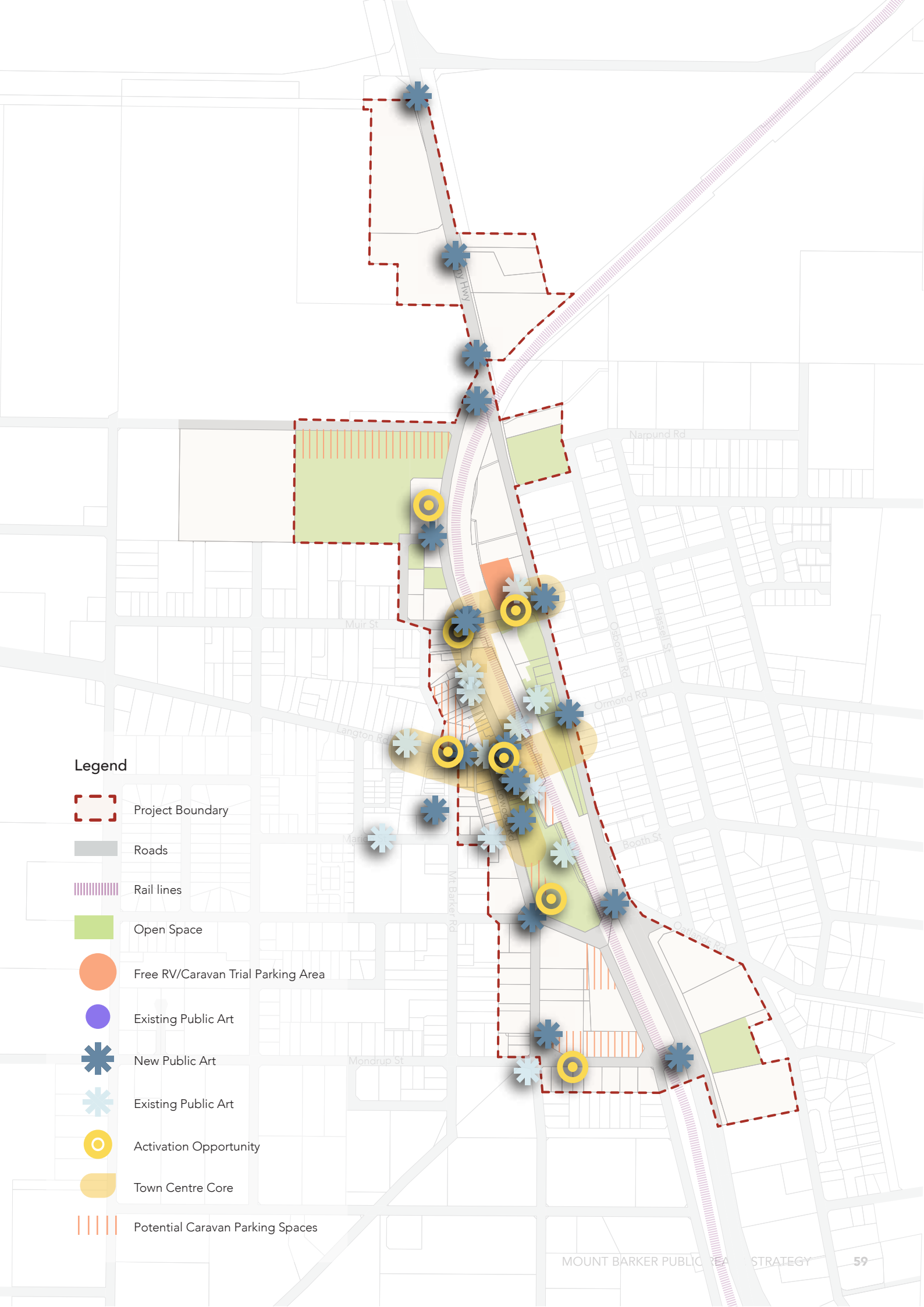
Signage Strategy

Creating clear and intuitive wayfinding signage is crucial for helping residents and visitors alike understand what Mount Barker has to offer and how to navigate the town with ease. Wayfinding signage goes beyond simple directions; it contributes to creating a legible public realm, fostering a sense of place, and making movement through the town comfortable and engaging. Signs should provide information about key attractions, facilities, and the walking distances between them, helping people confidently explore the area and discover the rich variety of experiences available.

Effective wayfinding integrates seamlessly with the town's character, using consistent design, clear graphics, and accessible language to guide people through both busy streets and quieter pathways. Incorporating technology, such as QR codes, allows for dynamic, real-time information that can enhance the visitor experience by offering updates, maps, or details about local businesses and events. In combination with landmark buildings and public spaces, wayfinding signage shapes how people move through and interact with Mount Barker, ensuring that each journey is not only efficient but also enjoyable, encouraging greater connection with the town.

Vacant Shop Front Program

To address the challenge of vacant shop fronts, several initiatives can be introduced to revitalize these spaces and support local economic growth. A pop-up shops program can encourage short-term tenants, offering reduced rents for new or seasonal businesses to test ideas and bring activity to underused spaces. In addition, a creative window display initiative could involve local artists and community groups, transforming vacant shop windows into art showcases that enhance the town's aesthetic while promoting the potential of these spaces.

Longer-term strategies could include a business incubator program, converting vacant shop fronts into affordable spaces for emerging entrepreneurs with access to mentorship and shared resources. Subsidized rent or grant programs could further incentivise new businesses to establish themselves in the town centre, reducing financial barriers and ensuring a steady stream of tenants.

Finally, initiatives such as shared retail or co-working spaces, shop front improvement grants, and temporary event spaces could foster greater community engagement and draw foot traffic to the area. By making vacant shop fronts active and attractive, these programs would help reinvigorate the town centre, creating a more vibrant and dynamic environment for both residents and visitors.

Events

Local events play a vital role in fostering a sense of community, bringing people together to celebrate, connect, and experience the vibrancy of town life. In Mount Barker, key event spaces such as the gardens outside the civic centre, Wilson Park, the IGA carpark, and Lowood Road (when closed to traffic) serve as the heart of public gatherings. These spaces offer unique opportunities for both small and large-scale events, from markets and festivals to concerts and community celebrations. The activation of these areas through events encourages social interaction, supports local businesses, and contributes to the town's economic and cultural vitality.

To ensure these spaces are well-suited for events, several essential components should be considered. Adequate infrastructure such as power access, seating, and shelter is crucial to accommodate vendors, performers, and attendees. Versatile open spaces that allow for flexible layouts and crowd movement are also key to facilitating various event types. Additionally, accessibility features such as clear signage, ramps, and pathways ensure that all community members can participate. Green spaces, lighting, and aesthetic elements help create a welcoming and attractive environment for events, encouraging people to spend time in the town centre and enhancing the overall experience. By designing these spaces with events in mind, Mount Barker can continue to strengthen its community bonds and cultural identity.

Red Tape Reduction Mind Set

To promote a thriving and dynamic community, it is recommended that the Shire of Plantagenet adopt an enabling mindset that focuses on reducing red tape and streamlining processes when interacting with council. By prioritizing user experience, the Shire can create a more supportive and accessible environment for residents, local businesses, and developers, encouraging growth and innovation.

This approach would maintain a strong commitment to safety and regulatory compliance, ensuring that all legislated requirements are met. However, it would focus on efficiency, transparency, and customer service, making processes clearer and easier to navigate. By embracing this mindset, the Shire can enhance its reputation as a forward-thinking community that actively supports its local businesses and residents, while upholding high standards of governance and safety.

Community Grants

It is recommended that the Shire of Plantagenet establish a community grant program designed to support local businesses and community groups in delivering place-based projects. This program would provide financial assistance for both physical interventions—such as beautification efforts, small infrastructure improvements, and public art installations—as well as local events that foster social interaction and community spirit.

By empowering local stakeholders to take an active role in shaping their environment, the grant program would encourage creativity, innovation, and ownership over public spaces. It would help cultivate a vibrant, locally driven culture while aligning with broader goals of enhancing the public realm and supporting the town's social and economic vitality.

7.9 Updating the Framework

To implement the actions and projects proposed in this Public Realm Strategy, several adjustments and additions would be required across the Shire's planning framework, policies, and local laws. These changes will align governance structures with the strategy's goals, enabling the creation of vibrant, connected, and accessible public spaces.

Planning Framework Adjustments

Amend the Local Planning Scheme

Incorporate provisions for placemaking, prioritising public space enhancements in key areas like the town centre. Allow greater flexibility for mixed-use developments, active street frontages, and temporary uses in strategic locations. Introduce specific overlays or precinct plans for hubs of activity, streetscapes, and welcome zones to guide design outcomes.

Strengthen Development Contribution Plans (DCPs)

Expand DCPs to include funding for public art, temporary activations, and streetscape upgrades, ensuring resources for implementing the strategy. Require developer contributions for improving connectivity, pedestrian infrastructure, and green public spaces.

Policies for Public Realm Design

Adopt a Public Realm Policy

Establish principles for integrating public art, wayfinding, and pedestrian-friendly design into all public spaces. Specify standards for amenities, including seating, shade, landscaping, and sustainable materials.

Develop a Public Art Policy

Introduce a percent-for-art scheme to ensure consistent funding for artworks that celebrate local culture and identity. Define processes for commissioning, maintaining, and engaging local artists.

Create Temporary Activation Guidelines

Outline procedures for implementing parklets, pop-up spaces, and temporary seating installations, simplifying approval processes. Support experimental projects to test ideas for permanent public space improvements.

Local Law Updates

Revise Activities in Thoroughfares and Public Places Local Law

Enable temporary activations, public art installations, and pop-up programs in public spaces. Introduce provisions for flexible use of streetscapes, including outdoor dining, seasonal markets, and mobile vending.

Simplify permits for temporary uses, ensuring accessibility and alignment with placemaking goals.

Infrastructure Standards and Streetscape Guidelines

Introduce Design Guidelines for Streets and Public Spaces

Define design expectations for primary movement corridors, connector streets, activity streets, and local streets. Incorporate requirements for wide footpaths, street trees, traffic calming measures, and amenities like seating and waste bins.

Enhance Wayfinding and Connectivity

Adopt a cohesive wayfinding strategy, integrating signage, public art, and digital tools (e.g., QR codes) to improve navigation and engagement.

Governance and Funding Mechanisms

Establish a Public Realm Implementation Plan

Develop an action plan prioritising short-term, medium-term, and long-term projects. Assign clear responsibilities and timelines for delivery.

Introduce Public Space Grants

Create community and business grants for projects that activate public spaces or contribute to placemaking, such as pop-ups, murals, or street beautification.

Support Public-Private Partnerships

Encourage collaborations with businesses and community groups to co-deliver upgrades and activations.

Community Engagement Framework

Facilitate Participatory Design Processes

Regularly involve the community in planning and designing public spaces to ensure alignment with local needs and aspirations.

Engage Stakeholders in Trial Programs

Use feedback from temporary activations, free RV parking trials, and pop-up projects to refine policies and long-term plans.

Sustainability and Environmental Standards

Incorporate Sustainable Design Requirements

Require the use of low-impact materials, native landscaping, and water-sensitive urban design in public realm projects.

Promote Green Infrastructure

Encourage urban greening, such as green walls, expanded canopy cover, and rain gardens, in streetscape designs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Establish Performance Indicators

Track the success of public realm improvements through metrics like increased foot traffic, business growth, and community satisfaction.

Conduct Regular Reviews

Periodically update policies, local laws, and plans to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

7.10 Actions Overview

Proposed Actions	Timeframes		
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS			
01 **Heritage Dam Walking Trail** Re-establish a walking trail linking the caravan park and motel to the town centre via the historic Government Dam to encourage car-free visitor movement.	■		
02 **Recognising the Northern Tourism Hub** Develop walking trails and create visual links to connect accommodation and heritage sites at the northern town entrance, marking it as a tourism area.		■	
03 **Northern Entrance** Enhance the northern entrance with public art, wayfinding signage, and landscaping to celebrate the town's identity and create a welcoming gateway.		■	
04 **Mid Entrance** Improve the mid-entrance area with wayfinding markers, pedestrian-friendly design, and a park redesign that honours heritage while enhancing activation.		■	
05 **Town Centre East to West Crossing** Improve east-to-west connectivity in the town centre with accessible pathways, clear wayfinding, and seamless integration into the regional network.	■		
06 **Wilson Park Rail Crossing** Upgrade the Wilson Park rail crossing with landscaping, built form enhancements, and wayfinding signage to improve accessibility and navigation.	■		
07 **Southern Entrance** Transform the southern entrance with public art, landscaping, and pedestrian and cycling amenities to create a safe and inviting gateway.		■	
08 **Langton Entrance** Enhance the Langton Road entrance with elevated streetscape design, wayfinding, and landscaping to strengthen its role as a secondary retail gateway.		■	
09 **Secondary Link Streets** Upgrade secondary link streets with shaded environments, quality footpaths, and cycling infrastructure to improve connectivity and accessibility.			■
10 **Short-cut Link** Formalise a pedestrian link with a footpath to provide a safe and defined route, prioritising frequently used paths, particularly by schoolchildren.	■		
11 **Cemetery Trail** Establish a walk/cycle trail connecting to the cemetery, prioritising existing adjacent trails to enhance user experience.		■	
12 **North - South Recreation Trail** Strengthen the north-to-south movement network at Wilson Park by integrating safe and comfortable pedestrian links in all future POS designs.	■		

Proposed Actions	Timeframes		
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term

CREATING HUBS OF ACTIVITY

Proposed Actions	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
01 Bakery Hub — Enhance the bakery's role as a hub by improving parking, creating inviting spaces for relaxation, and activating underutilised land nearby.		�	
02 Wilson Park Hub — Develop Wilson Park as a versatile community open space with play areas, reflecting the town's identity and creating a vibrant landmark.		■	
03 Town Centre Core — Activate the town centre by enhancing heritage shopfronts, improving Civic Centre Gardens as an event venue, and bridging connectivity gaps.		■	
04 District Hall Hub — Activate the District Hall hub with a free camping trial, enhance Centenary Park, and develop an event precinct around Memorial Drive and Centenary Gardens.	■		
05 Sporting Hub — Support the sporting hub with infrastructure upgrades and public art celebrating local history, fostering pride and belonging.			■
06 Tourist Activity Hub — Create a welcoming visitor hub with public art, wayfinding, and cohesive design to ensure a strong first impression and inspire exploration		■	

LINKING THE HUBS

Proposed Actions	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
01 Landmark Building Planning Framework — Update the planning framework to guide the development of landmark buildings at key intersections or transitions to act as visually distinct anchors that aid wayfinding and enhance the town's identity.		■	
02 Activity Programming — Host events and festivals that span multiple hubs to encourage exploration, social interaction, and the dynamic use of public spaces.	■	■	■
03 New Street Trees — Incrementally plant new street trees as part of all built environment projects to enhance the urban canopy, improve walkability, and reflect the town's "nestled in nature" character.	■	■	■
04 Wayfinding Signage — Develop clear and intuitive wayfinding signage with consistent design and optional QR code technology to enhance navigation and visitor engagement.	■	■	
05 Walking Routes — Develop comfortable and accessible walking paths that connect activity hubs, enhance natural landscapes, and encourage engagement with the public realm.	■	■	■

Proposed Actions	Timeframes		
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term

SUPPORTING LIFE IN THE PUBLIC REALM

Proposed Actions	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
01 Free RV/Caravan Trial Parking Area Trial free RV and caravan parking for 12 months to attract travellers, increase local spending, and assess long-term viability.	■		
02 Corner Upgrade Revitalise the Langton Road and Lowood Road corner with public art, seating, and landscaping to create a vibrant focal point and enhance pedestrian experience.		■	
03 Public Art Install public art throughout Mount Barker to reflect local heritage, beautify public spaces, and foster community pride and engagement.		■	
04 Temporary Activations Introduce pop-up installations, such as parklets and street planters, to activate public spaces, encourage community interaction, and test new ideas.	■		
05 Revitalising Vacant Shop Fronts Activate vacant shop fronts with pop-up shops, creative window displays, and business incubators to reduce vacancy rates and support local economic growth.	■		
06 Community Grant Program Establish a grant program to support local businesses and community groups in delivering place-based projects, public art, and events.	■		

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